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THE ISLAND PRINCESS,

A ROMANCE OF THE OLD AND NEW WORLD.

BY EMMA D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,

Author of "The Lost Heiress," "The Curse of Clifton," "The Missing Bride," "Retribution," etc.

CHAPTER I.

AN INTERRUPTED WEDDING.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and trembling of distress,
And cheeks alternate, that was true before
Blushed at the praise of their own loveliness!
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and clinking sighs,
Which ne'er might be repaid, and unseen eyes
Whose tears drop first in secret, and where secret most
Since oaps speak in sweet silence, and a word
Is broken sometimes when the full heart sighs.

It was the first of May, the marriage day of the Viscount Montrevor, of Montrevor Castle, Dorsetshire, and Estelle, only daughter and heiress of Sir Parks Morelle, Hyde Hall, Devonshire.

A glorious morning! the dewdrops, blue sky smiled down upon the green hills and dewy dales and deep woods of Devon; and the park around the Hall was all alive and musical, with the joyous songs of birds, and the merry laughter of young men and maidens gathering to celebrate their May-day festival, and to do honor to the marriage of their landlord's daughter.

The elm-shaded, winding avenue that led from the highway to the house, was arched as each terminated in a mammoth wreath of flowers, and many were the carriages that passed under them, on their way to assist at the wedding; and these contained only the bridesmaids, and the nearest friends and relatives of the family, whose relationship or position gave them the right to attend the bride to church—for a still more numerous party had been invited to meet her at the altar. The village and surrounds, grouped about under the shade of the great oak trees, or wandering over the greensward on either side the grand avenue, watched these equipages as they rolled on, commenting—as usual—

"That is Sir William Walworth's carriage—he is the bride's uncle by her mother."

"Who don't know that?—Hush! my eyes! lend me a mirror, Joe, or I shall be dazed blind, staring at looking at the turn out! Whose is it? since you know everything."

"That?—that's Lord Dunbright's—the great cove's at once a lord's and an old bachelor's, and a rope's end though, so you'll rise one of these days, Bill, my lad, if you don't keep out o' the squire's preserves!—hit by rabbits, and plodding and keeping on the right, do you see, of the poverty line be; until he get himself hanged, like a fool!—which people do say he'll get upon the woolrack yet," replied the gamekeeper, Joe, as the splendid equipage of the new member of the house of peers dashed past them.

"Yes; but what does he do here?" inquired the laborer, Bill.

"He's the old father of the bride, you know, besides being a bachelor without children, I mean unmarried-born."

"Here comes somebody's like a hoss—my granny! how solemncoly! who's comin' to a funeral?"

"Oh, you don't—*don't* you? that's the carriage of the old Duchess of Gravenmister, the grandmart of Lady Morelle. She was expected at the Hall yesterday; something must o' stopped her," said Joe, in a large, manly, dark-colored hunting carriage lumbered heartily past.

"What o'clock is it, Mr. Joe? you're a weatherwise and you will be inspired a young girl leaving a group of maidens and joining the two men.

"What o'clock, my dear?" replied the gamekeeper, looking up at the sun with an air of consequence. "Well, I should say it was just about a quarter to ten."

"Oh—dear me! and the weddingers won't pass till seven-three! and we to be at our rural festival hours! and I went to be away at the Maypole so early!"

"Hush! my darling! look! here comes his Lordship's carriage, here it is, and you'll see how the prettiest lass in the country," whispered the gamekeeper, as a very plain but handsome travelling carriage of dark green, drawn by a pair of spirited grey horses, rolled on up the avenue towards the Hall.

"Where Lordship's! What are you thinking about, Joe? Why, it's Mr. Montrevor's, you fool!"

"Why, his Lordship's! *The Lordship's*—the only Lordship to be thought about now, you fool! Lord *Montrevor's* Lordship!"

"Now that's impossible, Mr. Joseph! If you be gamekeeper, you sha'n't make game of me, at that rate. Lord Montrevor! Harry-coming! what should he, of all men, be doing here at the, of all hours?"

"Come up to marry, I suppose. Anyhow like."

"Nonsense! It can't be, I tell you! It would be out of all manners! Now, Joe, you know! He's to bring all his groomsmen, and his friends, and relations to the wedd, and wait *here* for Miss Morelle and her friends and relations at *Thet's* manners."

"I know it be so!"

"That shows it can't be Lord Montrevor who drove past just now."

"But I know it be, also! Don't I know his Lordship's grey and crimson liveries! and his co't arms—the lion couchant, and the lady asleep co't? It's him, now just as sure as you are just the sweetest creetur in the world; but what I be thinking of be—*what's to pay?* It looks like something's was creetur!"

THE ARRIVAL OF THE BRIDE.

"Creetur! I believe you! Who ever heard of such a thing?—If it be Lord Montrevor."

It was Lord Montrevor.

Early that morning a note from his affianced bride had been put in his hands summoning him to a private conference with her at the Hall, before they should proceed to the church. Surprised and filled with vague uneasiness, his lordship lost no time in obeying the behest.

And it was really his carriage and liveries that passed.

Within the most secluded of her suite of richly-furnished apartments at the old Hall, half-buried in the depths of a cushioned chair, reclined the bride expectant, in bridal array.

On her right, a gorgeous choral mirror reflected in prismic hue her beautiful form.

On her left, through the rose-colored silk hangings of the ballroom bay window, wafted by the balmy, sunny atmosphere of the pure blue sky and tender green foliage of spring, scents of fragrant flowers, and sounds of singing birds and innocent laughter, from the park.

She was alone, her attendants having, by her own desire, withdrawn.

Estelle Morelle—or "la belle Estelle," "Beautiful Stella," "the Midnight Star"—as the fair, resplendant dark beauty, she was poetically named —was at this time twenty-five years of age, and more lovely than a poet's or an artist's ideal. Her form was of medium height, and very slender, though rounded, with a graceful bend, over which fell rich masses of jet black, silken ringlets, shading a face of pure, pale olive complexion, with large, mournful, dark eyes, habitually veiled by the long, drooping lashes, and delicate, though full carved lips, ever patiently closed as in silent resignation. The prevailing expression of her dark, brilliant countenance was a profound melancholy.

The mournfulness of Miss Morelle's approaching marriage with the Viscount Montrevor had created a profound sensation in the fashionable and aristocratic circles of Devonshire, where, by only child and heiress of the oldest, wealthiest and most honorable family in the West of England, her heart had been as much the object of aspiration to the youthful and ardent, as her head and fortune had been the object of desire to the mercenary and ambitious.

At the early age of seven years, Estelle had been placed at one of the first-class female institutions of learning at Paris, then as now, considered among the very best of their kind in the world, and there had been left to remain until her sixteenth year, when she suddenly sickened, broke up of the institution, and her own severe illness, had occasioned her recall. That illness had been attended with marked changes in the constitution and temperament of the young girl.

Estelle, previously the most careless, light-hearted and capricious of children, left her character of gentle submission, thoughtful, melancholy thoughtfulness! The laughing lips of girlhood closed in pallied sadness; the sparkling eyes drooped under beams under long, shadowy lashes, now seldom lifted; the silvery, chatty voice, each into deep and thrilling tones; the free, glad motions were measured and controlled.

She never entered another school, but completed her education under the best masters, at home. To a disposition that was constitutionally reticent and chilly, her parents traveled with her over Europe, passing at each capital and chief town, in short stay all that was interesting and curious. But though their daughter repaid their attentions with the most tender gratitude, and stayed them with the gentlest docility, she showed no interest in the passing scenes. And though everywhere her generous beauty and sweetness of disposition, not less than her fortune and position, drew around her many friends and admirers, Estelle remained alone in her isolated thoughts and feelings. Every most distinguished physician in Europe had been consulted upon her case, and the result of their wisdom was a decision that this melancholy was not the effect of ill health, still less of secret sorrow, but that it was a constitutional phase that would probably pass away with passing years.

They returned to England, presented their daughter at court, and introduced her into all the galeties of fashionable life. But with no happy effect upon the spirits of Estelle, who remained profoundly unmoved amid the stir that greeted her *début*. Her picturesque beauty was the theme of all tongues—her mournful glance was fascinating—her deep tones thrilling—her touch magnetic—all felt her power, yet she who could move all others, remained unimpressed. She who sought to conquer, but cared very coarse perhaps, made many. A poor and two commoners, in succession, laid their fortunes at her feet, and were in turn kindly and finally rejected.

So passed her first season in London, at the close of which her parents took her down to their seat in Devonshire. Here, in her thoughtful, quiet, unostentatious manner, she engaged in works of benevolence among the villagers and the tenantry. And her father, hoping much from this employment, gave her full liberty of action, and enabled her to use that she seemed less pensive than before.

At the beginning of the parliamentary term, the family went up to London.

And it was then her second season in town that Estelle formed the acquaintance of Lord Montrevor, a young nobleman but lately ascended to the viscounty and to his estates, and who was one of the most high-toned moral and intellectual exhibitions, as a nobleman, in the ruling aristocracy, and as one, who in the event of a change of policy would be likely to be called to fill a high official position in His Majesty's new cabinet. And the union of the glare of rank and wealth and power, Charles Montrevor's glorious personal gifts of the Creator's workmanship. Above the average standard of height, with a fine, symmetrical head—shoulders and deep-chested, with a noble head, and a face full of wisdom and goodness, his appearance truly indicated the warm benevolence, clear intelligence, and pure spirit of the man. His presence soon inspired Estelle with a faith that she had not been able to feel in any other that approached her. She grew nearer to her than any other had been permitted to come; he crossed the magic circle of her isolation and reached with her at no other had been allowed to do. The world looked and said that the beautiful Stella had at last met her master and was conquered.

At this stage of affairs the parliamentary term ended, and Sir Parks Morelle and his family left London for Hyde Hall.

Lord Montrevor asked and received permission to follow them, and in less than a month availed himself of the privilege to do so. Thus it was in the home of her ancestors, after having received the cordial sanction of her parents, and believing themselves on a subject thoughtful, melancholy woman! The laughing lips of girlhood closed in pallied sadness; the sparkling eyes drooped under beams under long, shadowy lashes, now seldom lifted; the silvery, chatty voice, each into deep and thrilling tones; the free, glad motions were measured and controlled.

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"Stella!—a man never lost once, in his whole existence, loves a woman as I love you! I will not inquire the cause of the rejection, which you have certainly a right to make without assigning any reason for the act. And after having received this rejection, I may not in honor distress you by a renewal of my suit. But this, in parting, I must say to you—that, though I go hence, I shall not go out of the reach of your friends; I shall never address another woman; so if, ever in the course of future weeks, or months, or years, however long, you may think proper to review the decision of this evening, Stella, I implore you, do not hesitate to let me know! Write but one word, 'Come;' and I return to lay an unchanged heart at your feet!"

Estelle was weeping too bitterly to reply.

"Stella, will you promise to do this?"

"Lord Montrevor, best and dearest friend! Do not seek to bind yourself to one who can give you nothing in return! Try to think of the melancholy girl that you have pitied and loved—only as a friend, and fill for a moment across the emotions of your path, and then passed away forever!—and so forget her!"

"Stella! I have pledged my honor never to renew this suit, unless you reverse in my favor the sentence you have pronounced upon it; but, be replied by the deep and doubtful tone I hear you, and 'hoping against hope,' I feel impelled to implore before leaving you, that, in the event of a favorable change of sentiment or purpose towards me, you will not hesitate to let me know it. Return. Stella, will you promise me so much as that?"

"Nobler friend that I have in the world I have gladly would I promise, but I must not. Montrevor, I ought I to do so, you would be bound to wait the changes of my mood, and so, for a most undeserving love, might miss, in some nobler woman's affections, the happiness that for you I covet."

"Stella, will you raise your sweet, mournful eyes to mine one moment, that you may read my soul while I speak?"

Estelle lifted her dark orbs to meet the clear, pure, blue eyes bent with so much love and candor upon hers, and read the deep, unchanging truth and sincerity of his soul as he said—

"Stella, in the presence of the heart-searching God who sees and hears me, I assure you that I shall never love another woman as I love you, and that, should you ever reverse your present decision, whether you give me this slightest of hopes or not, I am equally and forever bound! Also shall you promise, Stella?"

Let me know in case of a change in your sentiments."

For an instant the light of an unutterable love and joy broke on her beautiful, dark face, and her swelling lips parted to speak—when—with a sudden memory and warning had gripped her very heart—she started back, shuddering, as if struck from before, and then, said—

"No, my Lord! Stella cannot even give you that! She is poorer than the poorest, in gifts like these. She can only pray that you may forget her and be happy!"

He looked profoundly disappointed and troubled. But seeing nothing but her decision in her face, he said—

"Well, dearest Stella, although you reject me without apparent reason, and refuse to give me the slightest promise or the most distant hope, yet *I repeat*—should you in the long future change your purpose, and write to me one word—'Come,' I will return that very day at your feet an unchanged lover. Good bye! God be with you!" and raising her hand, he bowed over it, pressed to its lips, turned and left the room.

Some moments after Lady Morelle, who came to seek and congratulate her daughter upon what she imagined to be the only possible result of the interview—found Estelle lying in a swoon upon the floor! It was followed by a long and terrible illness, terminating in a sufficiently protracted convalescence. The town season was at hand before Estelle was able to resume society.

They went up to London and once more the "star of beauty" arose upon its world. And though the cloud upon her life settled darker and heavier, day by day—though she grew still more reserved, gloomy and isolated—she was more followed, fêtered and courted than before.

Thus three years had passed away, when one morning, while the family occupying their town house in Berkely square, were seated at a late breakfast, and Sir Parks accompanied in reading aloud from the London Times an account of the saving of the French ship—Le Dun D'Aigle —wrecked off the coast of Algiers—Estelle uttered a low cry and sank fainting from her seat.

This attack was not, as the doctor had feared, followed by illness; on the contrary, from that day, the dread seemed lifted from her head, and even those who had most admired her face in its shadow, were enchanted to see how brilliant was her beauty in the sunshine! Her health and spirits daily improved, yet in the midst of all the flowing tide of new life, Estelle attended her friends by suddenly, in the height of the London season, retiring to her father's country seat, where she remained in strict seclusion from the world for eighteen months.

At the end of this period, Lord Montrevor, who had never left England, or lost trace of his beloved Stella, and who was now staying at his castle in Dorsetshire, was one day seated at breakfast when the morning mail was brought him. Among a score of letters the first that attracted his attention was a dainty white envelope superscribed in a delicate handwriting. He took this up first and opened it with a confident but not over-hasty air.

The light of an ineffable joy broke over his face! Oh! he had waited, patiently, hopefully years, for that word, and what he had received it! Thanks to Heaven in the first moments! and then pacing all the other letters unopened aside he sprung up, rang for his valet, and ordered his valise packed and his chaise to be in readiness.

In twenty more minutes he had reached the railway station just as the express train was starting, and in three hours he was at Hyde Hall and standing in the presence of Estelle! Estelle, lovely as beautiful and happy!

With the old chivalric enthusiasm of devotion, he dropped, at once, upon his knee, and raised her hand to his lips, saying—

For four years I have bowed and waited for one word from you, and at last, beloved, you have written—'Come!' and I am at your feet, Estelle, but with an unchanged heart!"

"But I," she said, deeply blushing, while she held both hands to raise him, "I, my Lord, have not an unchanged heart! for longer than four years I have loved you more than words can tell—and never more, than at the hour in which we both farewell, as I thought, forever!"

"I know it, beloved! I knew it then! I knew it always! I knew it!" Try to think of the melancholy girl that you have pitied and loved—only as a friend, and fill for a moment across the emotions of your path, and then passed away forever!—and so forget her?"

"Nobler friend that I have in the world I have gladly would I promise, but I must not. Montrevor, I ought I to do so, you would be bound to wait the changes of my mood, and so, for a most undeserving love, might miss, in some nobler woman's affections, the happiness that for you I covet."

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"My beautiful Stella! I am here, you perceive, by your command."

She dropped her hands, and revealing a face pale with misery, spoke in a thrilling, deep, impassioned tone:

"You are here by my *supplication*, my lord! I have an right to command."

"We will waive that! what is your will, my dearest Stella?"

"*My prayer*, my lord—is first, for your forgiveness!"

"*Forgiveness?*—my Stella?"

"Ay! my dear lord! you see before you a penitent and a supplicant, who long soon be searching for more wretched!"

"Why Stella! what mean you?"

"Come to the window, Lord Montrevor!" she said, rising and preceding him. "Look out," she continued, parting aside the rose-colored hangings, and revealing a view of the park below, alive with its restless multitude. "What see all these people waiting for, my lord?"

"What see they? waiting for, my Stella?—for that, for which I also wait, with how much more impatience! to answer, while a deep flush of love and joy, for an instant, supplanted the anxiety on his face.

"They wait to see a bride pass, where a bride may never go!" she said, in a solemn voice.

"Stella! my dearest! what say you?" he exclaimed, gazing on her with profound astonishment.

"That the bride they expect is unworthy to stand before God's holy altar beside Lord Montrevor's!"

"Unworthy, Stella! You?"

"*Me!* unworthy, my lord!" she said, dropping her arms, and drooping her head in an attitude of the deepest misery. "I should have made this confession long ago, Lord Montrevor, while a deep flush of love and joy, for an instant, supplanted the anxiety on his face.

"They wait to see a bride pass, where a bride may never go!" she said, in a solemn voice.

"Stella! my dearest! what say you?" he exclaimed, gazing on her with profound astonishment.

"That the bride they expect is unworthy to stand before God's holy altar beside Lord Montrevor

and the stately bridesmen and the fair bridesmaids.

"Such a queen by virtue of her brand and brow!"

and there were the dignified Sir Parke, the regal Lady Mowbrie, the haughty old Duchess of Gravesminster and the splendid Lord Dazzlebright. And there within the altar rails before the side-stood the venerable Bishop of Exeter, between two assistant clergymen. And all—congregation, counpanions and attending officers were regarded with looks of admiration, affection, or pride, the presence of the beautiful bride.

The Bishop opened the book. And every white eye was bushed, and every eye reverently dropped as the venerable prelate, in a solemn voice, pronounced the first words of the impressive service.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together, here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman, in holy matrimony; which is commended of St. Paul to be honorable among all men; and therefore is not to be entered into unadvisedly, or lightly; but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly and in the fear of God. Into this holy state these two people present come now to be joined.

"If any man can show just cause, why they may not lawfully be joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace."

The Bishop now made the usual solemn pause during which not a breath seemed drawn in the silent church.

Though had any one been sufficiently near that ill-omened group in the shadowy corner any they might have caught the deep, hurried whisper of the woman.

"Attend you, Victoire?—listen, then, my son!" And the trembling reply of the man.

"Yes, Madame!—but mon Dieu! I will!"

Meanwhile the rite proceeded—the grave voice of the prelate was pronouncing the questions.

"George Charles, will thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance, in the holy estate of matrimony? Will thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her in sickness and in health; and forsaking all others keep thee only unto her as long as ye both shall live?"

The Bishop paused.

And the bridegroom, fixing his eyes in unutterable love upon the downcast, beautiful face of his bride, in a grave, firm tone replied:

"I will."

Then the same question being put to her, she lifted her large eyes for an instant to his, and a glow of ineffable devotion suffused her beautiful, dark face as she breathed the fervent vow.

At the next question—"Who giveth this woman to be married to this man?"—Sir Parke Dashwood stepped forward, took the hand of his daughter and placed it in that of the Earl of Rockingham, and it to the hand of the bridegroom. Lord Montrose received the cherished gift reverently, tenderly, with a deep inclination of his head, and then a thrilling pressure of his clasping hand.

Then followed the putting on of the ring; and then the prayers, the valedictory, and finally the nuptial benediction.

The imposing solemnities were over.

And Donald gathered up with blessings; and then came in turn, the grave, earnest, tender, gay or gallant forms of congratulation—as the officiating clergymen, the bride's mother, bridesmaids and bridesmen pressed around with many kind wishes.

This occasioned some considerable delay, in the midst of which the dominie quietly drew the dark corner pew might have been observed to steal out and retire from the church.

"Excuse me, sir!" as Iough smilingly said Sir Parke, sympathizing with the blushing embarrassment of the recipient of all these congratulations, and taking her hand and placing it upon the arm of Lord Montrose, who drew it closely to his side, bowed around to his friends, and turned to lead his bride from the church—a performance more easily to be wished than accomplished, they the people were now pressing out of the pews, and the aisles were choked up with the crowd. Thus their progress from the altar to the door was an affectionate and great one—a progress accompanied by thus a delay of more than half an hour intervened between the moment of their receiving the nuptial benediction and that of their issuing from the church-door. At the church, the yard was crowded with people, all eager to see the new-wed bride pass.

The whole party, including the officiating bishop and clergymen, were expected to return to Hyde Hall to partake of the wedding breakfast; after which, Lord and Lady Montrose would set out for his lordship's castle in Dorsetshire, where they intended to pass the honeymoon.

The church-yard was so crowded that it was with great difficulty and after much hindrance that Lord Montrose's carriage could be driven up. And with his shrinking bride upon his arm, and her friends around, he would before he reach the door, until it drew up, and one of the footmen alighted, let down the step and opened the door.

His lordship then bowed to his friends, and was about to hand his lady into the carriage when a policeman, pressing through the crowd, placed himself between the carriage door and the bridal pair, interceding their further progress, and very respectfully inquired—

"Which of these ladies here present, bears the name of Estelle L'Orient?"

"No one here bears that name; stand out of the way, sir," said Lord Montrose, haughtily, while Estelle, with a half-suppressed cry, hovered her veil and shrunk nearly out of sight.

"Let us pass, sir!" repeated his lordship, sternly.

"Pardon me, my lord, if in the discharge of my duty I must delay your lordship!" answered the officer, who, in manners and address seemed much superior to his station.

"What mean you, then, sir?" gravely inquired Lord Montrose, while Estelle held her face in the folds of her veil against his arm.

"My lord, I have a warrant here for the arrest of one Estelle L'Orient, and if I may ask, which is the lady," said the officer, indicating the bride by a respectful inclination of his head towards her.

"Yes! Mon Dieu, that is the woman!" exclaimed a shrill voice, coming from the little old dark and shriveled Frenchwoman, who stood at a short distance in the crowd.

"Eh! Mon Dieu, yes!—that is my woman!—that is my bride!—that is the wife of the felon!" exclaimed the vindictive looking Frenchman by her side, gesticulating the while like a madman.

A crowd of admiring and curious ground closely upon the group, around the carriage-door, before which stood the policeman. And through this crowd, as one having authority, now came Park Morelle, inquiring in haughty displeasure—

"What is the meaning of this delay? Good people give way! My lord, in the name of Heaven, put Lady Montrose into the carriage, and drive on! Let us get out of this! Why Montrose! Estelle! what the fiend is the meaning of all this?" exclaimed the baronet, perceiving now for the first time by the pale, corrugated brow of the bridegroom, the shuddering form and hidden face of the bride, the resolute bearing of the policeman, and the horrified looks of the people, that something—he guessed not what—was fearfully wrong.

"What is the meaning of all this? Montrose, why do you not speak?" he asked, in an agitated voice—when, turning haughtily upon the police officer, he demanded—

"What is your business here?"

"Excuse me, Sir Parke Morelle, I am here on duty."

"*What* duty, fellow?"

"I am charged with a warrant for the apprehension of one Estelle L'Orient!"

"Where?" Seemingly demanded the baronet.

"One Estelle L'Orient—this lady."

"Out of the way, fellow!—you are drunk! and richly deserve to be sent to prison! There is no such person here! Out of the way, I say, or I shall give you in charge!" exclaimed the baronet, losing all patience.

"Pardon me, Sir Parke, but I must execute my warrant," persisted the man; then stepping forward and laying his hand upon the shoulder of the bride, he said—

"Estelle L'Orient, I arrest you in the king's name; you are my prisoner!"

"*Arrest!*" thundered Sir Parke, striding forward and striking off from his shoulder the hand of the desecrating hand of the policeman—"Are you mad?—have you the least idea of what you are about?—do you know what you are about?"

"Perfectly well, Sir Park Morelle. I am about to take this lady into custody," said the officer, approaching his prisoner.

"Hands off, fellow!" cried my lord, in a rage, "you shall dearly rue your mistake."

"Pardon me, my lord—I cannot! but by and bye shall be happy's warrant," said the man, drawing the instrument from his pocket, and while the crowd pressed closer around in amazement and curiosity—Sir Parke stood the picture of incredulous astonishment and anger—Lord Montrose, with corrugated brow and compressed lips, contained in the form of Estelle, who had never stood with clasped hands, white face, and stony eyes, gazing upon the figure of the Frenchman, as upon that of a phantom raised from the dead—the policeman unfolded and read the following warrant:

COUNTY OF DEVON—To the Constables of Hyde and all other peace officers in the said county of Devon, greeting:

Forasmuch as Gabrielle L'Orient, widow, now in this said county, hath this day made information and complaint on oath before me, George Beaumont, one of his majesty's justices of the peace, and for the said county, that Estelle L'Orient of the said county, on this Thursday of the first instant, at the parish church of Hyde, in the said county, did intermarried with George Charles, Lord Viscount Montrose; and since then he the said Estelle L'Orient hath been and still remaining in those realms—these are, therefore, to command you, in his majesty's name, forthwith to apprehend and bring the said Estelle L'Orient before me or his majesty's justices of the peace in and for the said county of Devon, to be dealt with according to law. Herein fail ye not at your peril. Given under my hand and seal this 1st day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and—

GEORGE BEAUMONT.

The officer finished the reading; folded the document, returned it to his breast-pocket, and stood for a while waiting. No one, who had not seen, could imagine the consternation that held the assembled crowd in a state of breathless silence. Sir Parke Morelle was the first to break the fearful spell.

"MADAM!" he said, striding up and confronting the petrified bridegroom, who never looked—was the most alarming features in the case—" why do you not speak? if this is a conspiracy, expose it—where is the wretch that has made this accusation?"

"Here, my lord! Behold me! I am that wretch! I deposed it! I—I—I—I!" cried Madame Victoire, who is the wife of my son, Monsieur Victoire L'Orient." exclaimed the wicked Frenchman, pointing to the man, whom Sir Parke now saw and recognized as the quondam governess of his daughter. Before he could speak to prevent her, she rushed upon his child and inquired, in a tone of appalling command—

"Madame! answer! What foundation is there for this tremendous charge?"

"*It is true,*" said the wretched Estelle, letting her arms fall by her side and her chin drop upon her breast, with a look of utter despair.

"Do your duty, officer! Remove your prisoner! Take the culprit out of the church!" cried the baronet, nearly maddened by the shock that had so suddenly buried his towering pride in the dust.

"Sir Parke! Sir Parke! in mercy, you will not separate us!" cried the bride, clinging to Lord Montrose.

"By all the demons, sir, she is no child of mine! I renounce the wife of Monsieur Victoire L'Orient!" exclaimed the infuriated baronet.

"Sir Parke, for the love of God! *look on her!*" prayed Lord Montrose, laying his hand on the arm of the enraged father, and pointing to the pale bride.

"Release me, sir!" thundered the baronet, breaking from his clasp—"My carriage there, ho! Lady Morelle, you will—come with me!" he commanded, sternly.

"Lady Morelle has fainted, and has been conveyed into the church, my lord," said the Duchess of Gravesminster, who had remained standing in an attitude of stern and solemn indignation.

Sir Parke left orders for his carriage to come up, and then strode off into the church after his wife.

Lord Montrose sought to reassure the deserted and despairing woman at his side.

"Estelle! dearest, suffering one, take comfort; all that a Christian man may do for you, in your extremity, shall be done by me; rely on me, I will never fail you."

"Monsieur, the constable! look at that woman. She has no right to be on the arm of my lord. Do your duty!—arrest her!" exclaimed the Frenchman, in a violent rage.

"I for I must not long delay, my lord," interrupted the policeman, respectfully.

"One moment, officer, if you please. Madam! for the love of the Saviour, restrain your passion for one, until I send a clergyman to attend her. Estelle, dearest! I must, for your own sake, leave you now; I will send you prayer and. I will see you again at the magistrate's—until then, farewell," said Lord Montrose, gently withdrawing his arm, detaining arm and laying her upon the half-petrified, haughty bosom of the Duchess of Gravesminster.

"God forever bless you, my lord! Whatever becomes of poor Estelle—she will pray forever and bless you!" murmured the poor girl, waving him adieu.

Lord Montrose hastened into the church and into the vestry, where the Bishop and assistant clergymen were taking off their robes.

"My lord!—what has happened?" exclaimed the venerable prelate, almost appalled by the pale and haggard countenance and hurried and anxious manner of his lordship; while the two assistant clergymen approached and *looked* the wonder they forbore to speak.

Lord Montrose hastily and briefly related all that had passed; together with the history of the wretched marriage into which Estelle, while a child, at school, had been inveigled by the designing governess and her unprincipled son, with the account of the crime, trial, conviction, and transportation of Victoire L'Orient, the young exposition, and the final published report of his loss in the wreck of "*Le Due D'Aqtaine*," three years since.

"The warrant for her arrest was issued by Sir George Beaumont, a brother magis y of my father. He must have taken the deposition and issued the warrant immediately after the marriage ceremony was concluded. He must have been on the premises for that purpose; for I saw his carriage leaving the church," said his lordship.

"I saw Sir George himself in the church," said the Bishop. "Certainly, the elder of the two clergymen.

"In the church! then he witnessed the marriage, heard the solemn adjuration at its commencement, might have spoken, stopped the proceedings, and saved the unhappy of ladies from her present misfortunes! Any but a malignant enemy would have interfered in save her!—The cowards! to quietly go to trial and come up at the next assizes! and there I am sure justice would be upon the side of outraged against her. And if the course of this magistrate has been as I suspect, that fact will be carefully concealed from the world, and the court will also go far to hurl George Bannerman himself, and bring off from his dastardly murder. However, the father of Estelle has abandoned her to her fate! I, unhappy, though my late relation to her, am disabled from directly protecting her, my known intervention would be far more likely to injure than benefit her cause. But I will see Estelle, sir," continued his lordship, turning towards the Bishop, "immediately! Pray, Mr. Wilton, go with Mr. Trevor, sir, friends of her family. Your age, my soldier, and your character, should secure you proper and desirable persons to stand in the relation of friends to this unfortunate lady. Go with her to the magistrate!—will you, Mr. Wilton?"

The two ministers spoke together for an instant, and then the elder replied—

"Most willingly will we attend the lady, my lord, in the form of friends; but we have never seen fire George Bannerman, and dreaded that she has taken before some other and impartial justice of the peace."

"Upon the whole, so sir it will make little difference, to the end of the matter. Go, then, my friends, and I will follow you."

Again the two clergymen conversed apart, and Mr. Trevor spoke—

"We are not bankers, my lord, it is true; but we can afford to risk some hundred pounds a year."

"Risk, sir? There will be no risk—do you know Estelle, and begin to think that she has the present herself for trial?"

"Certainly my lord, my dear lord! The word was unhappily chosen. I meant merely that we might be held *responsible* for so much money."

"Go now, dear sir, to that poor girl, lest the fiendish Frenchman should have her locked up, gladly tarnished by holding my finger that blighted, hoping to prevent the trial, by a private visit to the magistrate."

"I go my carriage, if no other is provided, Old-field; I will find a seat in Lord Montrose's, and be in attendance also," said the kind-hearted bishop—where upon every one of these gentlemen bowed. The reverend gentlemen thanked the bishop, and left the church in search of their friends, and found On reaching the yard they found that every carriage that had been waiting at the door of Hyde Hall and the door of Estelle, had left the scene. Yes—parents, friends, acquaintances, bridesmaids and bridesmen, and all the lower crowd, though the plague were there. The Duchess of Gravesminster, who had remained standing in an attitude of stern and solemn indignation.

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A FORTUNATE RUIN

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

CHAPTER I.

George Balleston sat in his room at his hotel. He was a young man of six-and-twenty; tall and slim of frame; with a face of exceeding intellectual beauty; and dressed in costly garments, which showed the taste and individuality of genius. He was an orphan, and for some years had boarded at the hotel. It required but a single glance at his face to satisfy one that he was an honorable man. He sat with his head resting upon his hands, and his whole frame showed ease and some trouble as though with some powerful emotion.

As the youth sat thus his door was opened, and an elderly gentleman entered.

"Ah, doctor,—you are moving early this morning," said Balleston, as he hastily arose from his seat and extended his hand.

"Not more early for me, George," returned Alpine, with a bright smile. "I am an early bird."

"Well,—you've caught a worm this time."

"I hope 'twill prove a valuable one!"

"I don't know," sighed the youth. "I fear a thousand worms will blotch this poor body ere long!"

"Nonsense! You're worth half a century yet," cried the doctor, giving him a gentle slap on the shoulder. "Come, George—how's your ill, wild Rowland?"

"Just as I told you. All is gone."

"I don't understand it, George."

"Neither do I," said the young man, sorrowfully. "I have declared I could have done the very thing I would not—could not—have believed. Rowland, my father's friend, died a year ago, and told me that Rowland was shaky, I would look to his estate—and he appointed me his executor. He knew my father died, he selected for my guardian his best friend—and such I even now believe Rowland was—and in his hands he placed all his wealth, for him to keep until I attained my majority of age. And before I was at that period of life I left my money where it was, and sent me for it. Several times, within three or four years, has Rowland asked me to take my money—perhaps all or half of it—but I would not keep it, and see if it be wished. I only asked that when I wanted money he would honor my drafts. Five years ago, I think, I should have told had my money here in a bank on deposit."

"How much had he when he left?"

"How much of mine?"

"Yes."

"He should have had one hundred and twenty thousand dollars."

"What do you mean to do?"

"Ah—you have me on the big there."

"Have you no friends, George. God knows I would keep you if I could. I shall claim the privilege of such poor help as I can render."

"No, no, doctor—none of that."

"But I tell you I shall. I shall pay your debts, but you shall not refuse me the help I can give. Will. What do you say to going to sea?"

The young man's face wore the youth's pale feature at this remark.

"I have never made a smart hand at sea, doctor. I can hardly keep my legs on shore. No, no—I must—"

"Must what?"

"Also! I know not. I shall die—that's all!"

"Nonsense, George. I say it is so. You couldn't go into a store; and you wouldn't if you could. To do not wish to remain a pensioner upon the scores of your happier days. Think of it: At ten you will be free from all sources of mortification, and free from all contact with things you loathe. Think of it."

The young Balleston started to his feet and paced the floor for some minutes. When he stopped a part of the second already at work on him.

"If I went to sea what could I do?"

"Be second officer till the loss of a foreign trade?"

"Yes. You know I had a thorough schooling at that in my father's counting-house."

"Yes, and can have the berth of a supercargo."

"Can you sure I can get one?"

"Yes."

"And the salary?"

"Two thousand dollars."

"Doctor John Claudius Alpine, I will go!"

"Bravo!"

George Balleston walked one evening to the house of his wealthy employer, Mr. Rowland. It was a palatial dwelling, and many a hospital, many a charity school had been blessed. He rang the bell, and was admitted to the parlor. In a few minutes Mr. Wilton entered. The two only were by. She had been waiting until that age to be George Balleston's wife.

"Mr. Wilton, I have spoken—many moments of painful silence ensued.

"I already know all. I am going upon the sea. I am going to work for my living. I am going from my native land a beggar. I can not stay here. Mary, did I know you as I do—or, knowing you well, did I know you as I now understand you—I would have left you, and free you from all bondage. But I believed you loved me, and I could not bear to do that thing now. I know your love is too pure and holy to be lightly cast from your bosom at will. So I say—Will—will you—"

"But why wait? Here I not enough?"

"Mary, I love you as I never loved you yet. There are other feelings in the human heart besides love. That love is a pure principle which requires noble all other considerations. We must have sympathy; and as our love must be free. What I am going to work, you—you—you—will you wait?"

"But why upon the sea? Why away where my poor heart must ever beat in anxious hope and fearful anticipation?"

"Because I cannot remain here. Hundreds of the best families would be shunned that I shunned them because I was poor. They have seen me as I was once; I was proud. I would not be a pensioned upon the stinted stomachers of their moral life that I shunned them because I was poor. Mary, will you call me foolish; but I would kill me to stay here. Will you wait?"

"I will wait, if you will."

"Then Heaven bless you!"

The ruined youth was upon the ocean—his voyage commenced—his duties as laborer for his own hire. Month after month passed away. He was a strange fish for him to enter upon. From the ownership of immense wealth to the trade-books of a merchant-ship was a transition indeed. But ere he went on deck again he had fairly received that he would do his duty, come what would, short of death. He would forget that he ever did else but work for his livelihood. With these resolves clearly defined in his mind he already felt better.

At first our aspirations was too weak to do much. He was very sea-sick, and it lasted nearly two weeks; but when that passed off, and he could pace the vibrating deck with a stout stomach, his appetite grew sharp, and his muscles began to grow strong. At first his appetite craved some of the many delicacies he had been so long used to; but they were not to be had, and he very soon learned to do without them. The result was, that his appetite became restored to its wants; and his system began to find itself nourished by simple food, and in proper quantities.

For years he had looked upon breakfast as a mere matter of form. He set out upon tables of from more fashion. A cup of coffee, and perhaps a piece of dry toast, or some sweetened and highly-spiced meat, was all he swallowed in the morning. But now when the breakfast hour came he approached it with a keen appetite, and he was strong and hearty at an any time of day.

By degrees the ruffled locks became full; the dark eye assumed new lustre; the color, rich and healthful, came to the face; the breast swelled with increased power; the large expanded and grew strong; the muscles became more firm and true; the nerves grew calm and steady; and the garments which he had worn when he came on board had to be let out some inches, in order to make them encompass his person. His disposition became cheerful and bright, and by the time the ship had reached the southern capes of Africa he grew had all learned to love him.

Through many storms—through tempest and calm; through dark hours and bright, the young adventurer made his voyages. From year to year from the day on which he left his native land he labored his first month, and he was at sea. But he did not stop. The same ship, with the same officers, was going upon the same cruise when he returned. Then he was free to see Mary Wilton, and she would see. He saw Doctor Alpine, and the good old gentleman received his fine manly independence.

Through many storms was upon the sea—and again he assumed the duties of his office, and even more. He stood watch when there was no need of it, and performed duties that were no part of a post on deck.

At the end of another year the young man returned to his home again. He was now eight-and-twenty years of age, and his father's old friends would recognize him now. His face was bronzed by exposure; his cheeks full and plump; his frame was large and muscular, and his step was free. His muscular system wonderfully developed, and the men were few who could excel him in their trade of physical strength. When he first left the city, two years before, he had a fine, soft, white hand and thirty pounds avoirdupois. He now brought up his hand hardly at one hundred and seventy-six! Surely he was a new man in every respect.

On the afternoon of the third day, as he entered the office of Mr. Wilton, the clerk looked at a letter. He opened it, and found it to be from Mr. Wilton. He was invited to call at the office of the merchant's house at nine o'clock on that evening.

At the appointed hour George Balleston entered the merchant's parlor. He found Mr. Wilton and Dr. Alpine there. A warm greeting ensued, and then the merchant spoke to the young man:

"George," said the doctor, after the youth had taken a seat, "I have a piece of business which I think you would almost forgive poor Rowland for the sands of evil with your fortune."

"Forgive him?" returned George. "O—I did that in the first place."

"Well, well," resumed the doctor, "Mr. Rowland is here. Will you see him?"

"Why—what—" stammered the youth. Of course I will!"

The door was opened, and Mr. Rowland entered. He was an elderly man, but hale and hearty.

The old man and the young shook hands, and then seated themselves.

"You received a note from me, some two years ago," said Rowland, "asking you if you would leave me in whom I had trusted had got your money, and mine with it?"

"Yes, sir," whispered the youth.

"And you answered me," said Doctor Alpine was the man. He had your money."

"How? What?" gasped George, gazing from one to the other of his companions.

"Hold on, my boy," cried the doctor, while a variety of emotions seemed at work upon his person. "I was the villain. It was I who got your money. I was the villain, my boy. And now listen, and I'll tell you why."

"I saw that you were dying. Your father died of the same disease. I saw symptoms set upon you,—not a regular pulmonary affection—but a general breaking up of the system for the want of vitality. The mind was wearing out the body. The end was about to come. I saw that you knew the cords that bound it to earth. I knew that you could be cured; and I knew, too, that the only way in which it could be done was to make me so throw you upon your own physical resources for a livelihood. There was a morbid willingness over the spirit to pass away. You would have died ere you would have asked assistance, from the very fact that you looked upon exertion as a positive death. It was a strange state of both mind and body, and I knew that nothing but the most extraordinary means would work. I saw Rowland, and told him my plans. I assured him that if would conceive to you that I had lost your money, and that you would life for the sake of life, you could be saved. He was willing to do anything to save your body and then bade him clear out. You know the rest. And now, George, can you forgive poor Rowland before will you forgive me? Your money is safe—every penny of it—to the amount of a hundred and twenty thousand dollars. Rowland has suffered much in knowing how you looked upon him; but he has done so for your good. He has kept your money safe, powerful frame, as he was it to-night. And now, George, can you forgive him?"

It was a full hour before all the questions of the happy friends could be asked and answered; and when the doctor and Rowland had been forgiven and blessed for the twentieth time, Mr. Wilton said,—

"Pat!"

He left the room, and when he returned he led Mary by the hand.

Late in the evening, after the hearts of our friends had fairly begun to grow tired with joy, George asked Mary how much longer she was willing to wait. Mary asked her father, and the answer was—

"Two weeks!"

NATURALISM.—No species of reputation is so cheaply acquired as that derived from death-bed fortitude. When it is fruitless to contend, and impossible to fly, little applause is due to that resignation which patiently awaits its doom.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW-YORK, SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1857.

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ARTS OF PEACE.

If the nineteenth century is particularly distinguished by any one feature, it is by its sympathy with, and encouragement of, the arts of peace. Europe, it is true, is red with recent bloodshed, but her last revolutions were not the work of the spirit of the laws of war—such laws as in other countries has delighted in battle as a pastime—but of a climax of wrong heaped by the few upon the many, and made intolerably visible through the spreading triumphs of the arts of peace. The oppression of human knowledge is the expansion of man's sense of their own rights, and the source of deeper desire and ambition to assert those rights. Knowledge depends greatly in its circulation upon the freedom of the press, and the security the unmuzzled press, the thousand-tide-defying steam, the electric wire, and all other modern instruments, have diffused, and are diffusing political, religious, and social knowledge, is universally appreciated.

The intercourse of nation with nation, leads to the intermixture of ideas and habits, and transfuses through the circle of never so differing races a common feeling of interest and sympathy. Nations have indulged antagonisms, because they were kept by natural or artificial barriers wide asunder, Steam and lightning have broken down natural boundaries, and trade and travel, from a thousand points, rush over the old artificial seas and barriers, to a common centre. Knowledge has become free, and has breaking down social divisions, and caste and creed are thrown flat before the intercourse of commerce and travel. The sure destroyers of whatever is opposed to the natural freedom and interests of man.

From the moment men of various nations mingle in the marts of trade and knowledge, their tendencies to hostility are broken down, and in so much they have feelings and interests in common, and that war and trade are antithetical things, one the most probable of pursuits; that wars and feuds have, in fact, been the game of princes, and of whose feuds the people and sometimes the people have been sacrificed. What quarrel, really, has the human race with the Czar, or the bandits of "Kilkenny Cats," born to self-destruction? Not exactly! and the arts of peace are beginning to make men sensible of the fact; sensible that civilization is not a myth, and that humanity they will unite to turn the earth in a profitable, happy account, rather than manure it with their blood and tears; for the growth of corn and fortunes for their own wrists and backs.

What a glorious picture opens to the vision of fifty years of peace, with the human race turning its arts and energies to the culture of the earth, and the expelling of war and all its appendages. What a garden would spring from the wilderness, and what luxury here grow over the earth, and until wars and wretchedness would be unknown. War is the destroyer—the arts of peace the makers ravages and brides of men, and enable narrow, deserted by the arts of peace and commerce, fall before the advance of peace, and be blotted from the earth forever!

SUBSCRIBE.

In the rules of health put forth, from time to time, for the preservation of health, we find much said about exercise in the open air, and the value of "fresh air," but little about sunshine. And we find the great majority of people are pale-faced, and persistently avoiding the sun, and seeking the shade.

Now, shade is very inviting, especially in anticipation of passing the day-days and the brick and mortar barriers of a city. But shade is a negative refrain from uttering our genius against avoiding the unlighted shadow. It is a thing that can see as indispensable to health as the breezes of heaven. People must have the sun, and warm, and have their feelings" in unrelieved shade—as, even in constant darkness, as the experience of the subterranean workers of Cincinnati proves. Or we are told there are thousands of children, born and reared in the very caverns of the earth, and even in the abodes of their parents, who have never felt the direct rays of the sun—to commence phrase, here "never seen daylight."

So all potatoes grow in their cellars. But is there growth a healthy one? Are they not sickly and distorted vines they send forth to twist, and writhe almost visibly in search of the cheering ray of sunlight, that has insinuated itself through some crevice to prove supposed to exist at all. So pale and sickly grows of that shrub sprung from a seed blown by some "will wind" into that other equally darkened prison-shop.

This timely warning in behalf of your children, ye mothers! Never fear that "tanned" complexion, which was the theme of so many apologies, when your children returned, hot, ruddy, from the country. Rather rejoice, if there is a prospect of their losing their "beautiful pale complexion" again! In love will be your little one's pain—for be assured that we but utter an important truth in physiology, too much overlooked, or wilfully disregarded, when we repeat that the direct sunlight is as indispensable as pure air. There can be no real health in the habitual absence of the one any more than of the other.

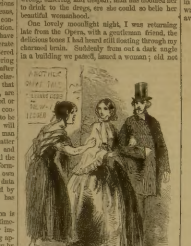
OPINIONS.

Two quite opposite notions prevail as to the right or duty of a free expression of opinions. One sort of politicians hold that no opinions should be expressed until they are fully matured; that is, until the persons indulging them is morally certain he shall never thereafter find cause for changing them. The advocates of this limited sort of expression argue, that in no way do we so much and largely add to the destiny of those around us, as by our opinions. That, in proportion as our position and influence are powerful, we are looked to for the lead, and followed by all those who never and weaker lights who may pin their faith to our opinions. They hold, especially, that in matters pertaining to the eternal well-being, it is of the utmost consequence that those who profess Christ they are uttered as convictions or opinions.

On the other hand, a large class hold, as they express it, that opinions may be uttered with safety to society, from first impressions. That the utterance of opinions, however crude and false, leads to their discussion and perfection. That we cannot begin to think, reflect or reason, without forming opinions, and that the surest way of improving our own, is to encourage the expression of others—from little children, who have caught the trick, and daily coarse at their parents, *Ah, and from a child's lips!* One would as soon expect a mammoth from out the heart of a rose. And yet, there are those who deliberately ask little children to "say their prayers," when they cannot explain nature his duty.?

As each from a woman's lips! With shuddering horror we shrink away, and ask, what bitter cup of the blessing and despair, man has doomed her to drink to the dregs, ere she could so blight a beautiful womanhood.

One lovely moonlight night, I was returning late from the Opera, with a gentleman friend, the delicious tones I had heard still ringing through my charmed brain. Suddenly from out a dark angle in a building we passed, heard a woman; I did not

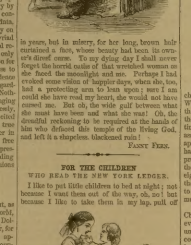


pause, but in misery, for her long, brown hair fell about her shoulders, and her head was on her arm's direct curse. To my dying day I shall never forget the horrible recital that wretched woman as she faced the moonlight and me. Perhaps I had evoked some vision of happier days, when she, too, had a protecting arm to lean upon; sure I am could she have read my heart, she would not have cursed me. But, oh, the agony of those words she must have been and what she was! Oh, the blighted hopes, the ruined life, the wasted soul of him who dictated this temple of the living God, and left it a shapeless, blackened ruin!

FANNY FERN.

FOR THE CHILDREN WHO READ THE NEW YORK LEDGER.

I like to put little children to bed at night; not because I want them out of the way, oh, no! but because I like to take them in my lap, put off



their shoes and stockings, kiss their white, dimpled feet, and hear them say their evening prayer, which they look so charming, and so pure. But *how* they kneel down, say their prayers, and *what* I say my prayers?" I always say No, because I do not believe in saying prayers; and when they use that expression it always seems to me, as if they wanted to hurry them over so as to have done with them. Much as I like to put the little ones to bed, yet I don't trouble them with a string of words as you only remember once in a while, when you go to Peter Piper Pipkin. That is not praying; your heart is hardly touched when you say it, and of course not; they would think you were mocking; and when you say prayers, and you really pray, you never speak a word; did you know that? Suppose you kneel down on one side of the bed, or in a crowded street, or car, or omnibus; rust you will, you might say the Lord's Prayer till you get upon your knees, before your dumb prayer can go up to God for help. Oh, how blessed that you can pray so! How, what would thousands of poor creatures do, who are driven to and from their tasks from dawn to dark, and then drop down, sleep down, when the day is done. What would they do, my little ones, when tried, tempted and discouraged, if a sigh, or a tear, or an upturned eye were not to God's ear in prayer? Little children, such prayers as these go like swift-winged messengers to heaven, while the long—dull—meaningless prayer does—Poor, it was born—on the parent lips.

FANNY FERN.

HEARTLESS.

My reader has doubtless heard of that celebrated young gentleman who gave his whole mind to the tying of his neck-cloth, and consequently achieved the highest knowledge of a knot. In this instance, perhaps, "the paltry prize was scarcely worth the cost," nevertheless, it is a good rule to give one's mind heartily and wholly to whatever work we have in hand. I know it is the fashion to laugh at men of one idea; but, notwithstanding the sneers, no great achievement is ever wrought without the untiring application, the bold devotion, and earnest against its object—

"Through long, long days of labor
And nights devoid of ease."

Did Beethoven have those wonderful melodies, destined to be an everlasting joy, without listening for them in his soul, and having all his mortal energies absorbed and swept away from the jar and tumult and conflict of the world without? Was Shakespeare, "when a new planet swims into his ken," recognize the speckles in the stone at his feet? or the isolated, sitting among his flowers, observe at the same time the shifting clouds? To do our work in masterly fashion, we must not only be absorbed in it, we must, practically, but we must also, at the same time have a hearty love of it.

"Happy is he," says Goethe, "to whom his business itself becomes a puppet, who at length can play with it, and amuse himself with what he sometimes makes his duty."

Let us have respect for that man, however humble his calling, who takes pride in it, and keeps the tools in order; and a corresponding disrespect for him who sneers at his trade, and does his work in a slovenly fashion. The subjoined lines were written in the spirit of this sympathy and aversion, and entitled—

THE PAINTER.

Painter, paint me a romance.
A dreaming and sunny-decked tree,
A cloud-flecked sky of blue,
And like a pure gold at the close
Of the entire near the tree.
A flowing the grass for me.
With a winding and dusty road before,
Not far from the tree of gold—
And the silver symmetric tree.

Well take you your trees and to-true
From that happy green of trees,
Under the summer tree,
The issue girl in his hat of straw
And the faded frock, for she
Is as fair as fair can be.
You have painted the sad hat complete!
Now the color of snow you must paint her feet,
Her cheeks and lips from a rose's leaf,
From sunflower-tissue her shining head.

Now, painter, paint the boy with the cane
Close to the grasp of three,
And a tired with bright brown eyes and wing.
Obeying merely.
"Twin two, with a wand, twice?"
That is all the song he makes,
And the child to wandering leader banks,
Answering, "here are we,
Father and mother and one?"
Proxy darling, her world is small.
Father and mother are all she knows.

Ah, painter, your hand is still!
Let the boundaries stand where
Under the summer tree,
But you cannot take all the skill
Of your colors coy, "twirl two, twee!"
Of your brushes that fly and flee
Father and mother and one.
Paint me a picture, paint me words
Talking outdoors, and charging limit.

ALICE CARY.

LITTLE CHILDREN.

The exclamation of the Master was, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Who can doubt the full intent of him who uttered those words! Meant he only to apply them to the children of his own day? Or, to children, fully? Has time? And was the injunction, so beautiful in the simplicity of its truth in the kingdom of Heaven, suppended to it, limited to sufferance? Not so have the angels, and the Father, and the Son interpreted. From the pulpit and in lumbler places, the words of the Master have been re-uttered there and there, in a language and a feeling that came to infuse the balm of healing into the bruised soul of man, and awaken a human tenderness, and to lighten and warm a mortal grief and ills.

Recollection, but not to the spirit of the Master. Christ saw, what the true "Son of God" must ever see, that only in the heart of the child, yet unsullied and unengrossed with the passions of the conceit, is the field wherein light, and truth, and love, can be sown with the largest promise of rich and glorious fruitage. The child, so near like the cherub, ever bearing in mind as a memory, even as like the angels, which have hovered in our most beautiful dream, and which the grossest and least spiritual of men cannot look upon, without some faint reminiscence of their own sinless childhood—in such a child as Caroline the type of all children, the Father saw not only the sanctity of heaven, but redeeming spirit for earth. He enlisted that sacred and holy which we perceive and adore in human nature, "The child is father of the man," and

"As the sun and the light, and the dew and the rain,
Ever be labored and strove to draw men unto him,
So only our mother, he cried, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not,
for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

And Christ meant not only that they should be suffered to come, but that they should be directed and encouraged to, and to find which was the way to represent him when he should be called personally to heaven. Under his mild and heavenly teaching, and under the light and warmth of his sympathy, he knew the tender, frail plant would expand into a divine, immortal flower; the flower of perfect justice, truth and love; and that the child, as it grew to manhood and womanhood, crowning humanity, would be all for which earth and the mortal state were made. Little children,—in them, of all human agencies, is the richest promise and hope for the future of the world. Where, all the earth, their hearts are once drawn in union to the Master; to his life, and lessons of love, and to the Father and Creator of all, and Brotherhood of God's children—men, and the sons and daughters of men—the world will end and become; then will sorrow be ended; then will joy cover the earth and the heavens descend, even as the prophet says, that angels and men may no more dwell apart.

OUR NEW CONTRIBUTORS.

In accordance with our recent promise, we this week add to the half-million of readers of the NEW LEDGER two new contributors, whose names have already been illustrious in the world of letters—GEORGE D. PRENTICE, Esq., who prepares our literary department, and MRS. SOUTHWORTH, whose new story will be found on our first page.

A MERCHANT of this city who was on the verge of insolvency, and who was driven by his creditors, was very rich, and took down to the house in a hackney coach. In the price of beef he found a customer, and his genial forebearer and agent immediately waited on him. "Well, Mr. Jones, what do you think of that?" "I think," said the merchant after a pause, "that you had better pay *butcher* and let me sit out."

WIT AND HUMOR.

PREPARED FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. H. PRENTICE, ESQ., OF THE LOUISVILLE JOURNAL.

It has been said that there is no royal road to learning, but no fortune is on record where such a road was laid out. A young prince being one day or stupid to learn his alphabet by the usual process, tutors of his court were placed in attendance upon him, each with a large letter painted upon his shield. The ingenuity of the master of the servants he was obliged to call them by their respective letters. But he would often forget names, and the whole game him all the literature that he was supposed to need for the discharge of royal functions.

We believe that the confusing societies have never been so dangerous as to which was the noblest in science of final affection on record.—Diet of the Roman emperors, who nominated their successors, and who continued to be reserved to death, from her own breast, or that of the husband, to whom she had been united in order as the army, his swinging father exclaimed, "Ah now, my darlint, you have got the best of your poor cold father, you have had more than all of my children, and the only one that never struck me after you was born!"

In a suit of Father Mahlitz, who throughout his profile and early manhood was noted for his strength, than as the age of seventy-six he pitched against a stammer, who was a great wrestler, was vanquished, and afterwards, on his recovering, challenging. Perhaps other stupid fellows might as well try to overcome their stupidity as the great barrow could his disadvantage.

Some folks are silly enough to disregard all good advice, unless he who gives it from fatty up in his own estimation. A certain quack, who was in the habit of prescribing to return the directions of a finger-post, unless it was to point out the way to a graveyard, and then to go there himself.

The Minnesota Pioneer wants to know whether, if the devil were to die, the newspapers would say anything of his character. If they didn't, the editors would be very apt to think that something was wrong at the house of the destroyer of the deceased—"stop my paper."

A man of very powerful eloquence is apt to congratulate himself upon it. He is still pity if a speech is a success, but the author of a paper, now before us, boasts in a case of eleven columns that he has not left out a one-third of a paragraph.

An alderman has been promptly enough defined to be a transparent humbug. Such, indeed, is the case in most of a city, is widened at the expense of a corporation. A western town has a street called Jones, in honor of a man who voted Polk-cross of the other act are habitually guilty of the same offence.

"This Counsel on the other side has lied on me." "I will not say that he has lied on you, but he has certainly lied by him." "Then take that name," replied the other, hurling an inkstand at his head, "for I will not lie by him."

A GENTLEMAN, if aggrieved, has a right to pull a blackguard's nose. He has no right to pull a man's nose. They should be left on for the accommodation of other aggrieved parties.

THERE is no slander number to the word alms, as if to mean to say that the poor are the greatest of all the sums. Our business, to be available, must be in the plural number.

THE knowledge which prodigies men have of the world would be much greater if strangers than they are, were it not that the world for the most part is made up of those who are not strangers to each other.

THE safest of all possible loves for vain young men is self-love. In the first place, it is a source of great satisfaction to the party loved, and in the second place, it delays it will not last long enough to do much harm.

WE have heard of but one man, who, living a great number of years, did not become old. That man was Methuselah.

IT is thought to be a question worthy of consideration whether a man can commit suicide with an axe that cannot better qualified to cipher it up. "Yes."

THERE is no mind that grows so much like infants. When the head becomes heavy, it is enabled; and it is generally supported by the hands of the nurse.

THE Chicago Journal says that we must in these days of wonders be prepared to see a fish walk about.

WE are reminded of a little man should never marry a bouncing widow. He might be called "the last of the Mohicans."

WHEN we see a pretty female foot, we naturally wish to see the whole of her, and when a noble enough the pit will be well than ends well."

IT is very well that the youth of our country should get high, as they should do so just as the sun does by drinking water.

A woman having left a child—a little girl three weeks old—in an iron hotel, a short time ago, quite accidentally, and returning to the establishment immediately, was told that she should take possession of the "little stranger." The mother, in her surprise, asked if "it was not the little baby?" whose love of his prize is brought.

A PORTLAND (Me.) paper says that an aged maiden lady (74 years old) is now engaged to be married. It has been in that city, who has many wealthy relatives, son of whom has been dead for about two years.

THERE is more building going on this Spring in this city than ever before known, and yet the rents are also far more costly than those usually erected heretofore. The buildings cannot be constructed cheaply on account of the great scarcity of labor.

The aggregate crop of the whole Union is estimated at 30,000,000 lbs., worth $2,961,000, which is very nearly equal to one half the product from the same area in the United States last year. New York produces more sugar than any other state in the Union, Louisiana next.

THE reports from California are highly favorable, and those who profess to know say that gold will be dug from the mines this season than on any previous one. There is, however, money enough with interested parties.

An old soldier named Peters, who served under Napoleon at Ligny, died a short time since at Arnhem in the Netherlands, aged 112 years.

FIRE whiskers arrived at New Bedford on one day, a short time since.

CURRENT ITEMS.

IT is rumored that when the Atlantic Telegraph is completed, the charge for a message of twenty words from this city will cause their prices to three cents, and it is said that the charge will be reduced to one cent per word.

The expense of a message from London to New York will be about $100 per word. The cost of the cable, if completed here would cost about a thousand dollars—a message of twenty words would cost from one to two cents per word. The expense of a message from London to New York will be about $100 per word. The cost of the cable, if completed here would cost about a thousand dollars—a message of twenty words would cost from one to two cents per word. The expense of a message from London to New York will be about $100 per word. The cost of the cable, if completed here would cost about a thousand dollars—a message of twenty words would cost from one to two cents per word.

A GROCER in Brooklyn being obliged to remove from his store, and finding it impossible to procure one to his liking, the other day, prepossessed by placing in a notice that he would rent his store to a man who could sell liquor. The next day he found a man in his store who had worked off, leaving a roll of ~~fifty~~ seventeen long drunkards before him. In two days he had rented his store, and finished upon the edge of the longboard to fund upon his delighted eyes a notice that he would not rent his store to such as these.

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"I AM AN HUSBANDMAN."

The Prophet Zechariah.

BY MRS. L. S. SIGOURNEY.

Then to the Earth's fair gifts to take,
Of fruits, and corn, and herb,
Than in her cold, unfeeling arms
Mid all the pomp of war's alarms
Her slaughter's mine to key.

Better the field of corn or wine
From her unresting mantle
Than ferocity, with a miser's zeal,
Rasseek and rend her shrinking breast,
For glittering dross, or gold.

Yet, better that on lowliest bank
The crocus trembles,
Than on a handerchief, * that claim
From Hindu's envied, costly name,
And rear, though nations call it fame,
A catalogue of sins.

THE WIDOW OF TOLEDO.

A TALE OF

"LOW BIRTH AND IRON FORTUNE."

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877, by Robert Bonner, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

[For the benefit of our new readers who have not read the preceding chapters of this magnificent interesting story, we will state, in order that they may understand it, that the heroine, Donna Isabel de la Riviere, was an accomplished widow, surpassingly rich and beautiful, who lived in the ancient city of Toledo in Spain, and was beloved by all the gallants of that city. She had a Secretary named Leon Garcia, who was supposed to be of low birth, was also the handsomest, most accomplished gentleman in Toledo, and was consequently the favorite of all the fair and favorite young women of the widow, but who himself cherished a secret and deathless love for Donna Isabel. Leon's father, who was in reality a nobleman, had married Don Garcia de Vargas—an disguise, and for whose apprehension a heavy reward had been offered by the King, on account of his broad woodsman and manager of the widow's country estate. This Antonio Serrano at the Viceroy's hearing ran away with his carriage, plunged into the river Tagus, whence he escaped by swimming, and was supposed to be dead. He was also fatally injured before any one could reach him. The Viceroy, on being restored to consciousness, was in a huge state of hearing by whom he had been rescued, but nobody could tell him. At last, a stray, sneering varlet named Sandoval, who was always on the lookout for means of replenishing his purse, discovered who the rescuer was, and by his ingenious gab, got an account of the Viceroy by disclosing his name. The Viceroy then sends his carriage of state to bring Leon to the Palace, where the very morning Ximenes tells the widow of her love for Leon, and exhibits a miniature of him, which he has stolen. The Viceroy's messenger arriving cuts short his piercing out her insolations. The widow is astonished at the request of the Secretary and performed the daring feat with which all Toledo had been ringing for the last twenty-four hours, and for the first time previously performed the dangerous and noble feats as he walks to the Viceroy's carriage, she has disappeared in love with him, and she has told him of the woman then became rivals. But, notwithstanding Donna Isabel makes promises and proposals to induce her marriage to offer, under pretense of examining papers and accounts, to the Viceroy's palace for election, from the many women of the city, and Donna Isabel has been given exclusive charge and arrange. Previous to the arrival of the Viceroy at the palace of the widow, but challenged him to fight a duel (he was the son of the Minister of Justice,) and slain him in a duel under a king's ordinance in the forest, by single weapons at the fight being the Knavish Pacolet, who having overheard the appointment for the duel had determined to attend to the transition of the sycamore, with the intention of riding the body of whomsoever should be slain. He then rifle the pockets of Ximenes, and thrown their certain documents into the river, and then rode off to Madrid. The Viceroy, Count Gondemar, had subsequently sent out to wring back money from the widow, and Leon had gone to Madrid as the deputy of a Franciscan friar, who, shortly after the tables upon him, and mean him give up the documents, from which he learned that Ximenes had become Secretary. In the meanwhile, the Viceroy suspecting that the Minister of Justice is plotting to oust him from office receives, on the advice of Don Jerome the superintendent of the provincial Secretary, to depose Leon and Pacolet in his service, so he is circumvent the machinations of Ximenes. This is the occasion of affairs at the commencement of the following chapter.]

CHAPTER X.

THE MARQUIS IN A FOOTING BUNCH FOR THE SECOND TIME.

The Count de Peres called, one morning, after breakfast, on his friend the Marquis de Sorbano, whom he found in his chamber, nothing blessed with an iced sherbet—a drink to which he inveterately resorted whenever he had any money.

"What now?" asked the count, throwing himself on a fauteuil, and glancing with laughing significance at the sherbet.

"Take some wine," said Sorbano. "I was afraid to set the cup before it. Have you been fighting?"

"Good or bad?" inquired the count.

"Hour and then judge. You know that in Masters of late much given to loitering in the office of his secretary."

"Loud,?"

The marquis bowed, and then looked at him with an air that said, "Why do you ask what I said?"

"Is this your news?" inquired the count, with a cautious smile.

"It is," replied Sorbano. "But it would seem from your eye, that you had heard it before?"

"You days ago, at least?" returned the count. "I had it from my valet, who is the confidant and friend with one of the fair widow's maids."

"Yes days ago?" repeated the marquis, looking hurt. "And you kept the intelligence from me?"

"Why, man," returned the count, laughingly, "if I had known that the lady had changed her mind since the, ere going to vespers, would it have been compliment on to the commencement of the following degree?"

"And do you attach no more importance to this new movement of the widow's than that?"

"So far as you are concerned—not by any, that the lady can have no objection to look into the details of her property without incurring scandal or your displeasure? You would not think of calling her out for it, I hope?"

"Have you with your bodiesgs. I am serious."

"In what?"

"Coming to the bottom of this."

"With all my heart!" said the count. "But do not ask me to join you in the task. I care for women too little, to rack my brains in discovering the key to their countless whims! But I see you have been meditating upon this matter—what conclusion have you arrived at?"

"This: that, for all your credit, the widow is attracted to the secretary's office by something more than a mere desire to 'look into the details of her property!'"

"Good; that is a blind one. But I am not deeply injured—have you to complain of me, then, in my judgment, you make a decided hit concerning the freak of the widow's, I will let you know."

"I have already given you my opinion," said the marquis, impatiently.

"What!" laughed the count, "is founded only on your jealousy. Bah! the kitchen view in the most reasonable."

"Whose kitchen's?" asked the marquis.

"The widow's own, to be sure. Tonsure, my valet, states that she kitchen is divided as to whether the lady is examining the secretary's cash account, previous to sending him adrift, or inspecting the particulars of her estate, for the satisfaction of some illustrious suitor. As for myself," added the count, "I side with the latter."

"And I with neither," said the marquis. "It is Leon that takes her there. I know it—feel it!"

"Pshhh-be-dee! She is a proud patrician, and rich—be a parvenue, and poor. The idea of her wooing him is ridiculous!"

"I don't think so," said the marquis, with characteristic stubbornness.

"Granting that you do not," returned the count; "what then? Will that bring you to the true cause—to, better still, will it put an end to the lady's lingering at her secretary's? If neither, then of what avail is your sympathies?"

THE ENCOUNTER OF THE WIDOW AND THE WAITING-MAID.

"I would?" answered the marquis, with pale but quiet firmness.

"What a selfish egotist is he!" muttered the count. "I shall have to cut him—that's flat! Now, by St. Francis! Sorbano," he said, aloud, "you are of a persistent make. But the fair dame of whom we speak is doubtless equally so proud, and, if you were to take to move a stand, she would be more than likely to shut her doors upon you!"

Then she would be in the right," retired the marquis, in the determined tone of one who has been petted up to knowing he will have his own.

"Softly!" laughed the count. "In case you resumed so unwarrantable a position, it would be the duty of every gentleman in Toledo, whether married or single, to spring to the rescue of the lady in distress!"

"No, no—that won't do!"

"I have said it!" repeated the marquis.

"But what is to come of it? Virtue is one's first duel!" said the count, with derisive gaiety. "Ever since you flashed your maiden sword in the air of that insolent bully, Mendoza, you have grown as accustomed of your own abilities as a young guardsman! Take a friend's counsel, and drop this folly; to cultivate it, will do you more injury than good."

"I know what I am about!" said the marquis, haughtily.

"Possibly! So does the miser, when he starves himself to feed his purse—the spendthrift, that he is hastening his ruin—the soldier, that disobeys the order of his general; but does his simple knowledge of what he is about make it right in the judgment? A man may know what he is about, and still not know half as much as he ought to."

"Cease your hankering, count, and tell me if I may count upon you for my friend?" said the marquis, with his own peculiarity.

"That depends upon what use you wish to make of me," laughed the count. "If to fight a woman, no; to fix her house, no; to carry her off, no; to give her up, no; to assist her in the affair of her husband or lover, no; to subscribe her servants, no; to conspire against the church or state, no; to lend any gentlemen into a snare, by which he may suffer in person, reputation, or purse, no; in all else—yes."

"I simply wish you to bear a message from me to Leon," said the marquis.

"To what purport?"

"To meet me to-morrow morning at daybreak."

"Why, what has he done?" demanded the count, in surprise.

"Is it not enough that I ask you to bear my message?" answered the marquis, testily.

"Not for me," said the count. "I go upon no errand of life and death, I am so much of a woman that my curiosity to know the why and the wherefore must first be satisfied."

"You are very particular!" observed Sorbano, drawing himself up.

"When I die," returned the count, "I would not leave it in the power of my bitterest enemy to say that I had ever acted otherwise than as became a Spanish gentleman! In other words, I have as high a regard for the purity of my honor, that I will do nothing to sully it. If the quarrel that you wish with Leon—who is one so much above me as to seem in my heart in Spain—is of a nature that you dare not explain, there, marquis, I will not say it, that if you look to find a friend to aid you in bringing him within reading distance of your sword, I am not he!"

"I have already said that Donna de la Montera stands not upon her own ground!" observed the marquis, shifting in his chair with dogged impatience.

"And I have already said that I cannot—that I shall then!"

"I will fight whomsoever she may regard with favor!"

"That is, in plain Spanish, you view the lady's apparent disregard for Leon as a sufficient cause for his death?"

Sorbano answered with a cold bow.

The count looked grave.

"Are you serious, marquis?" he asked, presently, "that you are not the out man in Toledo?"

"What do you mean, count?" demanded the other, haughtily.

"This:" said the count, rising, and surveying him with a kindling eye, "that when you ask me to do it worthy only of some poor wretch who is all bankrupt of principles that I, a man civilized, have been accustomed to revere as part and parcel of a true cavalier's religion. For making this request, Carlos de Sorbano, our friendship and acquaintance must instantly have an end. Should you feel disposed, however, to insist upon another interview, a note to that effect left at my lodgings will receive it by any time and place you may appoint. I have the honor, senor," he added, with an ceremonious bow, "to wish you a very good morning!"

"Come back!" cried the marquis, springing furiously from his chair.

"Excuse me!" returned the count, as he descended the staircase. "I have no wish to bandy words or weapons with you in your own house. But if, after sober, I should encounter you on the plaza, I will do myself the pleasure and you the honor to—kick you!"

With these words, and a decisive bow, Du Peres passed from the hall.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN a man is assured of a flogging, or, what is tantamount to it—a good, sound, kicking, and when he feels in his bones that the party promising the same is both able and likely to keep his word, he, however proud and self-sufficient, is rarely disposed to throw himself in that individual's way.

This was the case with the Marquis de Sorbano, who, knowing that his offended friend would be sure to look for him in the plaza in the afternoon, wisely concluded not to go there for several days, by which time he thought the count's anger would have sufficiently effervesced to make a chance encounter in the street not so likely to be one in danger. A quarrel with a man of the late Don Juan's acquaintance and friendship he held with disfavor, but Count de Peres, were, as the young marquis confidentially told himself, a very different affair. The former was simply an amateur; the latter a professional swordsman; and the marquis, like many another young man, felt self-confidence enough in his strength with rest of the amateur order, but very much the reverse in the presence of one to receive no very great degree in calling the secretary to his house, and by so doing his character free-lance and elasticity of their wrists, for steadiness of eye, for quickness of flexibility of limb, and for coolness of nerve. The marquis himself, however, was not one of them; but what he lacked in finesse of fencing himself, he made up in self-confidence, and though in the main, his vanity was comparatively harmless, it had its excuse in the affair with Don Juan, it had begun to assume proportions equally dangerous to himself and to others.

It was gymnasium hour, and thither he proceeded, as being the likeliest place to find a friend to go with him to the house of the widow of Toledo, and bute.

On reaching the gymnasium, he was equally delighted and surprised to perceive the secretary of Leon's among the number of those present, and when, catching the secretary's eye, he called him to his side, and inquired,

"You performed your part so well, senor, in the lesson from which you have just returned, that I should be glad to try you in one of a different kind to-morrow morning at sunrise, behind the sycamore-trees of the Alameda—will you accept?"

"I have no cause of quarrel with you, marquis," answered Antonio, with perfect coolness, "nevertheless, as this proposal is evidently a premeditated thing, and cannot be a matter of sport to you, I must, if needs be, into a conflict, I will not say you nay; and now, senor, having accepted your challenge, I think you ought to know why you have put it upon me?"

"I decline to answer!"

"Decline!" exclaimed the secretary. "Is this like a Spanish cavalier? You ask me to meet you at a certain place, and there confront our mutual claims to life, and refuse to tell me the reason? Is this manly, sir—generous—just? When men come out to mortal strife, it is usual for each to know some cause the inspiration of which gives additional nerve to his arm, and, at least in his own eye, induces his quarrel lady. And yet you expect me to dispense with this animating impulse? Proud lord, not so! If I am to be killed in fair fight by you or any other man, I first must understand the wherefore! And if I, to-morrow, should be asked by your parents why I have made their old age childless, I must needs be ready to give reply!"

"You flatter yourself!" sneered the marquis.

"I will see that my parents make no such demand!"

"I would insinuate nought against your courage or your skill, senor; but as history will tell you, courage and skill equally as great have, now and then, met their match, and been taught the folly of over-confidence! But a truce to quibble, I can neither converse like men above all time, and allow to the measure and dignity of their years. If I have wantingly done you wrong, give me to know it, and I will confess it and make reparation like a gentleman who has no tinder a regard for his own honor as for what is due to others!"

He paused for a reply; but receiving none, his lip slowly curled with scorn.

The marquis looked at the expression, and drawing himself up, he arrogantly observed—

"Gentlemen are not to be interrogated by a vulgar upstart who has only entered on his having vaulted himself into the society of his betters!"

Antonio, who, behind with indignant fire, and a soul, sudden gush crimsoned his cheeks and temples.

"Upstart!" he exclaimed, in a voice that attracted all eyes towards them. "Line! I am more than you, were you known as you are not! Dost hear, proud lord—twenty times your peer, and more than you are a born lord, and I will not struggler for bread! Yes, so immeasurably beneath you, that you have only to name your time as an infamy to own you for my slave; but that there may be no misunderstanding my appreciation of your manhood, I mark it upon your cheek —Thus!"

With the word, he spit upon the insolent patrician, who was spell-bound with mingled indignation, surprise, and fire twenty times his own.

Two rebuffs in a single morning are usually too difficult to swallow even by the most humble of a short, fitful breath, quitted the gymnasium.

The spectators of the brief scene looked at one another significantly. Sensible of the mutual daring and courage of the pair, they felt that, ever temporarily, one or both would have to answer for it. Closely has a thousand tongues, and by midnight it was known throughout Toledo that the marquis and Donna de la Montera had become rivals for the entire household was, notwithstanding, in a fluster of excitement. As all shortly to seem, there were reasons, "diverse and manifold," for the same.

The widow, ever since her new habit of visiting the office of the secretary, had scarcely spoken a gentle word to her waiting-woman. Indeed, it would have been difficult to discover from the fretful thing in the lady's manner, that she had ever regarded Ximenes in any other light than that of a mere creature that served her, and to whom she paid wages. All confidence and familiarity between them had ceased, and so effectually was made by either to the mere topic that invariably rose, with renewed force, every time their eyes met.

Their position towards each other was far from agreeable; and the widow, sensible of her own great share in creating their unpleasantness, and pitying the waiting-woman's visible distress, would have been delighted to tell her so; while Ximenes herself, instinctively conscious of what was passing in her mistress's heart, was fearful that she would give utterance to her wish, and thus forever separate her from her only possible hope of being able to attract the secretary's attention—namely, by being under the same roof with him.

And yet both felt that a plain understanding must sooner or later take place; and as day after day and week after week passed by, familiarity with this conviction gradually lessened it of its terrors till at length that, her from looking forward to it with dread, began to yearn for it with impatience.

The forenoon of the day which witnessed the incident at the gymnasium, was the one selected by fate for this important interchange of their regards.

It was just after breakfast, and while the widow, with the assistance of the waiting-woman, was making her morning toilet.

Both felt and knew that the hour at length had come when the long pent storm was about to burst. They had been conscious of it from the moment of rising, and now that it was at hand, they mentally braced themselves for the issue.

"You are looking paler than usual, this morning, Ximenes," said the widow, while surveying the general effect of her own appearance in the mirror, her eye caught the reflection of the waiting-woman's countenance.

"'Tis nothing, my lady!" returned the latter, with a sad, bitter smile. "What matters the kind of color in the cheek of a poor, friendless girl?"

"A good deal—sometimes!" said her mistress, calmly adjusting a troublesome ringlet.

"O, not sometimes!" the waiting-woman, plaintively, "if, like me, she be one of the serfs of service. Though, with the rich woman's eye, we are not supposed to have woman's instincts, sympathies, feelings. Our business is to suffer—to be cast aside—to tamely succumb to all manner of outrage, till our broken hearts lay us in our shrouds!"

The widow did not wish to understand her.

"Yes, at least, girl, have but little reason to complain of the absence of sympathy on my part for all you do; and are as well lodged and cared for as many a rich woman's daughter. What more can you—a mere servant—reasonably expect?"

"True, my lady! What more should I expect?" said Ximenes, bitterly. "A mere servant should be neither heart nor soul, but a mere thing! Welcome that she is not one of those who regard penitence in those as things that they may look to see performed!"

The widow colored; but it was as if to belligerent that she disdained aught, which evidently refused to lie as she would have it.

"As you say, girl," she remarked with an assumption of careless indifference, "it is the duty of all good Christians, and particularly those who service, to be contented with the lot in which God has placed them. They should never ape their superiors, or repine at their own condition, nor raise their eyes higher than their own level; such would be sinful and displeasing to our Maker. If I were myself a servant, I should make it a point to look only for a servant's duties, and should myself to be content with."

"And so she would, my lady; and would, with a cheerful spirit, rarely taken up in lodgings with the poor, and hence they remain so. That, at least, is the sensibility my lady!—Excepting always walk hand in hand with wisdom! If not, it is a—"

"I see no meaning in the question, girl. Explain!"

"The cruelty of the worldly wise who walk into the dwellings of the poor, and make them poorer still!"

"I am still in the dark!" said the widow, with a look of haughty surprise, "and ask for wiser interest."

"I, a seamstress, a kitchen-maid, or any other representative of the lowly, had a thing on which she placed great store, greater than all she had together, and found it perhaps, and that it proved to perceive its brightness and its value, and took it from me, and said it in a careless and careful spot it daily, hourly, aye, every moment of the day, till it was lost, and then—and then—and then—that it became a part of her very being—and she felt that she had such a claim upon it as had none other in the world, that she had such a right to it as to forbid its appreciate its excellence, to observe the brightness that it had lost, and to take some steps to treasure it according to its worth. It is true, my lady, that I am poor, and that my circumstances is at her own, and as a jewel which she had found or given, not loan, nor sell, for all other jewels in the world, but that I am poor, and that heart-sickness that came upon her one day when she discovered it—such a loss—such a thing—such a friend!—and who, on being shown the precious thing, should have said, 'Girl, this is not thine, but mine!'"

"What call you this precious thing?" asked the widow, who, having at last mastered the stubborn ringlet, stepped back to examine the general effect of her appearance in the glass.

"A *hope*, my lady," answered the waiting-woman, "that I was the child of a noble race of a mine—who is at heart no bankrupt in her love, that she is not one of the rule swinging the channels in her body as they are by sun up."

"Perhaps her hope was without a reasonable foundation!" observed the widow, coldly.

"It was her *all*, my lady. No, I forget. She has, and is, and will, and must, and can, and shall sometimes really, to hope!"

The widow, having completed her survey in the mirror, now turned to the door, ready for the flight, and, for the first time, looked her antagonist boldly and steadily in the eye.

The glance of the waiting-woman was modest but firm, and there was no appearance of the consciousness of her cause.

"Is this all, girl?" began the widow, "is a complaint, or she would have run after her jewel, which in reality or not was not hers, instead of sitting still and giving way to the dolors. Or, perhaps, that such jewels must first be lost, ere they can be valued, and that consequently, as I am the loser, I could not call it hers, because she was the earliest to find it out? Is that the reasoning of the law? Or the law that in such cases governs would have presented it to her right? Wherein, then, is she so grievously wronged?"

The waiting-woman were like so many quick, hard, stinging thumps on the heart to the unfeeling woman, who, losing her presence of mind, shifted the figure and struck out at random.

"But for me," she cried, shaking her head in tearful sadness, "you would have remained ignorant of this matter."

"Not so," said the widow, following her up, "Leon himself made them known to me, and so did Toledo also, the day before you called my attention to them."

"But you know my heart was set upon him?"

"I did. But it was as upon a thing we sigh for, but—cannot get!"

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"I had the future, and—the promise of your help."

"Neither the future nor my influence would have availed you. Like the golden astragal of the Olympian temple, which was for him who could climb to and take it down, he is beyond your reach. You cannot pay his price."

"His price?" said the waiting-woman, bewildered.

"He is above you, girl! The eagle whose dizzy soaring rises from upward the tall fir-tree is not for the careless shadow of the sapling sprig, is not even the superior of the cygnet whose highest flight is only to the nearest cloud."

"We are both poor; and he, like me, an humble worker in the field of service."

"Capital!" said she, delighted in venting treble spleen, mysteriously throw him there. But he is a master nature, and will put wing from her and his proper place among men. Who mates him must have, like his own, a soul worthy of the sphere to which he, of right belongs, and to which he eventually will climb. Are you she—you, however beautiful in all other respects, are still only a poor girl, without wealth, culture, qualities, influence, position! I'm upset you, girl? You are without sense, to think it!"

"And yet I do think it!" exclaimed the waiting-woman, with a flashing glance of pride. "I have a heart as brave as his or any man's, a purpose as active and as deep; and a spirit, too, that, if needs be, would go for him I have to the uttermost ends of the earth. Can you boast of more?"

"You forget whom you are addressing!" said the widow. "But, no matter. You are, I see, not over remembered your position, and as your doubtless think that I am somewhat ill-bred, I will overlook this fault. But be cautious: I may not always be so considerate."

"The season of coolness are in your own hands."

said the waiting-woman, half frantically. "You have but to say the word, and I am gone from the world!"

The widow surveyed her a few moments, and then entered—

"But I will not say that word, Ximene. Notwithstanding all that has been said, I cannot forget that you are a noble, high-minded girl, and that I am indebted to you for more than words can tell."

The waiting-woman started, and dropped her eyes to hesitated confusion. She feared that some of this change in her mistress's mind.

"You have continued the widow, "that if you had a fair opportunity, you could achieve Leon's conquest. Try it—the field is open, and you have my full consent to win and wear him, if you can. If you succeed, you shall not wive him overdress. Nay, I am in earnest. Either he must be of the most generous rivalry; and be sure of this if he for whom we strive be the man I think him, my wealth will have no influence in his election. Why, what is the matter with you, girl?"

"Is this true, the Viceroy said, or is love?" said an attendant, entering.

"Why, Leon?" continued the widow in an under tone. "What can be his business with me? Surely, not as a suitor?" Then, aloud, "Admit at once!"

"The Viceroy," continued the widow, as the attendant, the said, without, "Look to Ximene—she is ill!" and then turned from the boudoir.

The widow never, and the waiting-woman was conquered, but in a way that she did not expect, and she reeled fainting under the last blow. She generously does not kill, and a little cold water and a gush of tears relieved her, and brought back her hope again, stronger and brighter than ever.

The whisper of the Viceroy's arrival flew like magic through the household, and great and profound was the excitement it caused. Many were the meaning of the widow's constant visits of late to the secretary's or employment of the kitchen were understood why she was familiarizing herself with the details of her estate; now, they knew who the mysterious personage was for whom so long had been expected, was; now, everything was out; now, each wondered whether, after the marriage, she would be removed to the palace, to manage the culinary operations there, and whether she should remain where she was; now, matter swelled up pompously, and already made up his place relative to his office in the triumphal procession; now, the new rendered himself ridiculous and unpopular by affecting to be at home, and how the other, who had nothing to do with a marriage with the widow, absurdly and, as events declared that she neither never knew much, and now knew less than ever; and now, all but gardner were glistening with the silver of speculation and hope, and castles and pickings, for all were confident that they should be removed to the palace, to wait upon persons without delay; and in the height of his joy, butler kissed cook, and potter offered his hand to gardner, and gratuitously affirmed that he bore him no ill will, and hostilities embraced clumsiness, and all promised to "stand by each other" at "the new house," and, for the mistress's sake, as well as their own, to do all in their power to please the respective positions with dignity.

The Viceroy, who seldom visited, variously surprised and pleased at the stately air of mingled opulence and good taste that reigned around everything—at the fair visions of the garden, the house, the furniture, all spoke of that happy blending of ample means and good taste that the princes of princes in all ages have been more ambitious to attain than successful in accomplishing—partly reaching farther than the former.

"The youthful relic of our late counsellor is well handled," remarked the Viceroy. "How refinement contrasts the pains with luxury and plenty. What more than an abundance, and what need to be on love as soul as to envy her! What," he continued, "a perfect picture of peace and splendor and retinue—which, after all, are only intended to overawe the vulgar—since they bring not with them the secret balm of contentment! Give me, in preference to the finished shown, the hollow magnificence, and the anxieties of power, with the repose and the calm enjoyment of modest competence!"

The widow entered, and gracefully welcoming him, remained standing according to etiquette.

"Rest you seated, madam," said the prince, "I am here as a visitor on sufferance, and in my official capacity. I beg," he continued, with a pleasant smile, "that when you have learned the nature of my visit, you will sincerely thank me for coming."

"That," returned the lady, "can better be determined after your highness shall have explained its purport."

"It is a favor, madam, that I would ask. May, be careful how you too readily say 'tis granted; for there is one that I might hold you to your words."

"It is something of unusual importance, then, your highness?"

"I esteem it so, dear lady. But yourself shall be the judge. Your secretary—"

The widow started, while her cheeks became suffused with a wanton blush.

"I say that I am denied already!" observed the Viceroy, with a slight smile.

"What is it your highness would have appointed my secretary?" demanded the widow, recovering herself.

"To ask him at your hands, madam," returned the prince. "He was made for a higher position than that which he now occupies, and I would give him an opportunity to mount to his true place. If you will let me have him, I will promise to watch over his fortunes, and to advance him as rapidly as his deserts will permit."

The widow looked down gravely, and began to think that the Viceroy was not very wise—that in stealing that which he supposed his eternal, she would hardly thank him for the honor of his visit.

"I would not ask you to do a great wrong, madam," continued the Viceroy. "I can readily understand that your interests require to put in managing your estate; but individuals of his model are rare, and the state has need of them all. I would add, for your consideration, that I cannot but be sensible of my obligations to him as the preserver of my life, and that his interest shall be studied with paternal diligence. I am childless, and should he come up to my expectations, as I feel assured he will, I shall probably be tempted to make him my heir."

"I will think upon it, your highness," said the widow, after a few moments' meditation.

"Remember, madam," said the Viceroy, rising, "that your decision will have a serious bearing upon the young secretary's future. Should you conclude to grant my request, I pledge you my word and honor to leave nothing undone that can tend to make his career honorable alike to his country and himself."

"I shall remember, your highness."

"Thank you, madam. Adieu!"

The widow, composed as of a calm, self-possessed spirit, was now so bewildered that she could scarcely return his obeisance. She sank into a seat in a divan. She threw herself back on a fan-cushion to recover her coolness and to think.

The bewildered thoughts refused to be gathered, leaping through her mind.

"He is young the man she loved; with her consent, to his ever another's service! Never! Yet his bereaved will work enough for him to make his cause his, too; yes, raise him, in wealth at least, to a level with the proudest grandee in all Spain. What need had he for her assistance, indeed? What had the state done for him to warrant a claim? And with a power that he could not resist him; no, though the King himself should descend from his high throne and beg for what he now knows. She would hold him; yes, would maintain her right to him, while she could command a single crown to weave into a chain for him. She should have him; none but herself—none! Let Ximene, if she will, have Leon. Both are of generous rivalry; and be sure of this if he for whom we strive be the man I think him, my wealth will have no influence in his election. Why, what is the matter with you, girl?"

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"Why, Leon?" continued the widow in an under tone. "What can be his business with me? Surely, not as a suitor?" Then, aloud, "Admit at once!"

"The Viceroy," continued the widow, as the attendant, the said, without, "Look to Ximene—she is ill!" and then turned from the boudoir.

The surprise over, and the waiting-woman was conquered, but in a way that she did not expect, and she reeled fainting under the last blow. But generously does not kill, and a little cold water and a gush of tears relieved her, and brought back her hope again, stronger and brighter than ever.

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Sancho's head instantly raised, his eyes opened, and the next moment he had slipped out from his resting place, and was standing before the waiting-woman, on the piazza, and looking up into her face with an expression of "Well, what is it?"

"Asleep again, Sancho?"

"Only waiting on you," replied the boy, looking as bright as if he had been awake all day.

"Mistress desires you to take a message to—but herself will tell you where."

"I am ready," said the boy, following the waiting-woman into the reception-room.

"This to the Viceroy!" said the widow, handing him a letter. "Let not the grass grow upon your feet. Fly—begone! Let his highness read and answer it quickly. Despatch, and be prompt—I command it. We'll teach men modesty, when they do not know it already! And now, Ximene, that I have pushed aside this danger to our mutual hopes, our struggle commences. It shall be fair and open. I will take no unnecessary advantages of my position. I, from this hour, will abstain from my visits to the library. Nay, more; you shall have free access to the pictures at all hours, when Leon is at home. Now, to it! Let us see if Heaven has suggested this, for if another on earth has it in her power to win him, I would not give my castaway glove for his love."

"Are you already engaged, then?" asked the waiting-woman.

"No. But I feel in my heart that he is to be mine."

"Has he told you so, my lady?"

"He has not. We have never spoken on the subject. He is too noble, too high-minded for such feelings towards him, nor yet the cause of my freedom in the library."

"And yet you feel that he is to be yours?" said Ximene, her lips quivering with the question.

"I do feel I am sure of him."

The waiting-woman looked down in thought.

"Is the bewildered thought wrong?" he said the widow, smilingly.

The waiting-woman blushingly raised her eyes. Such one her thought.

"Beauty alone will not win him," said the widow. "Love is more than beauty and wealth, and his equal in ceaseless coldness and magnanimity. What need had he for more than he has? What he? What had the state done for him to warrant a claim? And with a power that he could not resist—him; no, though the King himself should descend from his high throne and beg for what he now knows. She would hold him; yes, would maintain her right to him, while she could command a single crown to weave into a chain for him. She should have him; none but herself—none! Let Ximene, if she will, have Leon. Both are of generous rivalry; and be sure of this if he for whom we strive be the man I think him, my wealth will have no influence in his election. Why, what is the matter with you, girl?"

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"The youthful relic of our late counsellor is well handled," remarked the Viceroy. "How refinement contrasts the pains with luxury and plenty. What more than an abundance, and what need to be on love as soul as to envy her! What," he continued, "a perfect picture of peace and splendor and retinue—which, after all, are only intended to overawe the vulgar—since they bring not with them the secret balm of contentment! Give me, in preference to the finished shown, the hollow magnificence, and the anxieties of power, with the repose and the calm enjoyment of modest competence!"

The widow entered, and gracefully welcoming him, remained standing according to etiquette.

"Rest you seated, madam," said the prince, "I am here as a visitor on sufferance, and in my official capacity. I beg," he continued, with a pleasant smile, "that when you have learned the nature of my visit, you will sincerely thank me for coming."

"That," returned the lady, "can better be determined after your highness shall have explained its purport."

"It is a favor, madam, that I would ask. May, be careful how you too readily say 'tis granted; for there is one that I might hold you to your words."

"It is something of unusual importance, then, your highness?"

"I esteem it so, dear lady. But yourself shall be the judge. Your secretary—"

The widow started, while her cheeks became suffused with a wanton blush.

"I say that I am denied already!" observed the Viceroy, with a slight smile.

"What is it your highness would have appointed

my secretary?" demanded the widow, recovering herself.

"To ask him at your hands, madam," returned the prince. "He was made for a higher position than that which he now occupies, and I would give him an opportunity to mount to his true place. If you will let me have him, I will promise to watch over his fortunes, and to advance him as rapidly as his deserts will permit."

The widow looked down gravely, and began to think that the Viceroy was not very wise—that in stealing that which he supposed his eternal, she would hardly thank him for the honor of his visit.

"I would not ask you to do a great wrong, madam," continued the Viceroy. "I can readily understand that your interests require to put in managing your estate; but individuals of his model are rare, and the state has need of them all. I would add, for your consideration, that I cannot but be sensible of my obligations to him as the preserver of my life, and that his interest shall be studied with paternal diligence. I am childless, and should he come up to my expectations, as I feel assured he will, I shall probably be tempted to make him my heir."

"I will think upon it, your highness," said the widow, after a few moments' meditation.

"Remember, madam," said the Viceroy, rising, "that your decision will have a serious bearing upon the young secretary's future. Should you conclude to grant my request, I pledge you my word and honor to leave nothing undone that can tend to make his career honorable alike to his country and himself."

"I shall remember, your highness."

"Thank you, madam. Adieu!"

The widow, composed as of a calm, self-possessed spirit, was now so bewildered that she could scarcely return his obeisance. She sank into a seat in a divan. She threw herself back on a fan-cushion to recover her coolness and to think.

The bewildered thoughts refused to be gathered, leaping through her mind.

"He is young the man she loved; with her consent, to his ever another's service! Never! Yet his bereaved will work enough for him to make his cause his, too; yes, raise him, in wealth at least, to a level with the proudest grandee in all Spain. What need had he for her assistance, indeed? What had the state done for him to warrant a claim? And with a power that he could not resist—him; no, though the King himself should descend from his high throne and beg for what he now knows. She would hold him; yes, would maintain her right to him, while she could command a single crown to weave into a chain for him. She should have him; none but herself—none! Let Ximene, if she will, have Leon. Both are of generous rivalry; and be sure of this if he for whom we strive be the man I think him, my wealth will have no influence in his election. Why, what is the matter with you, girl?"

"Is this true, the Viceroy said, or is love?" said an attendant, entering.

"Why, Leon?" continued the widow in an under tone. "What can be his business with me? Surely, not as a suitor?" Then, aloud, "Admit at once!"

"The Viceroy," continued the widow, as the attendant, the said, without, "Look to Ximene—she is ill!" and then turned from the boudoir.

The surprise over, and the waiting-woman was conquered, but in a way that she did not expect, and she reeled fainting under the last blow. But generously does not kill, and a little cold water and a gush of tears relieved her, and brought back her hope again, stronger and brighter than ever.

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CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH EVENTS TAKE A FAVORABLE TURN FOR THE WAITING-WOMAN.

The frequent visits of the widow to the library, and her long stays there had not been without their effect on the secretary, whom they severely tried. He was in love—profound, like the boy's previous displeased him, nor that he for one moment wished that he were other than he was; but there is a kind of magnetism which, though not set down among the sciences, sends throughout sensitive nerves an agony at once thrilling, delicious and overpowering; and this magnetism had been operating upon the secretary, and increasing in intensity daily, from the hour of the widow's initial visit to the library, to that of her entrance with the woodman's letter.

There are those who, from various causes, are blunted to all sensibility; but then there are also many who are not. Of these, it is comparatively impossible for one in the spring-time of manhood to look upon a woman in the bright bloom of her youth, and grace, and loveliness without a sense of the beautiful, a quickened admiration. Especially is this true when he has an appreciating eye for the beautiful, and his heart, fresh and green as a blushing virgin's, is ripe for love's first impression.

If this be the result of a single glance, what then must be the result of being seated for hours during the same air with her for whole hours at a time, day after day! upon one whose heart has already felt the touch of love, sympathy and silence—permitted to the subduing influence of her charms!

The widow was beautiful, and heavenly only for the giddy and the unthinking; but when, as in the widow's case, it is accompanied by the more solid dignity of thought and deportment which shows that there is beauty within as well as without—that the eye speaks, that the soul is seen through the features, then, indeed, it strikes at the interior being of the beholder with a power which is equal to the inviting exercise of an object worthy of their institutions. Such was the widow.

This was the kind of feeling that the secretary at first fancied he entertained for his mistress. But as time passed on, and he had augmented his self-deceptions, and had at last reached the center of his being, he knew not what he say, to think or to do; for the lady was rich and high-born, and there was also the great love of Leon, which was upon proud blood looks down in mocking pity and disdain.

But he struggled to resist the passion, and how he failed—with what energy he applied himself to his duties, and how easily in order to forget—all his and mudflips in solitary hours upon the hopelessness of his love, and the impossibility of its ever being stonily looked up from his monotonous toil, he, from the library window, beheld the arrival and departure of the lady in her gilded and pictured coach, and the many times that he was called upon to plead their suits, whilst he, who, in all the world, was the most interested, was compelled to be the "dumb" that he could not find the words to utter, and the "while" that led the widow so often to the library, he was in that state of mind when men look coldly yearning to the sun when the vines shall scorn them from the further torments of mankind—Tantalus. But the lady's wishes, like the best feather that broke the camel's back, was more than he, who is human, could bear. The secretary would kill him; and he had an indefinite idea that if he relinquished his position and went out into the world, he might yet win her. He would not stop, up to a position that would authorize him to speak of love, and to claim her hand in the right hand of the bright star, whose image was enshrined in the depths of his heart's holiest shrine.

These were the substance of the secretary's reflections while bending over his desk on the morning of the widow's visit to the library with the letter, and he had concluded—not, however, without a struggle—upon a plan of action that would replace him, for a time at least, beyond the influence of the widow's charms.

"I have just received this," said his mistress, laying the note before him with the seemed air of indifference that she had adopted from the first visit to the library. "You will perceive, from the note, the necessity of proceeding to Leon at an early day, and installing the new manager there."

Leon bowed without raising his eyes, and taking up the letter, perused it with seeming attention.

"I think," said the widow coolly, as her every word was shining deeply in his mind.

"I think," said she, "that we are of the same time conscious that it would compromise her dignity to be left alone with Leon in the affairs of one so far beneath her in rank.

As for Leon, he did not look for sympathy in the countenance of the widow, for he knew from one who could not be engaged to attach any importance to the circumstance of passion in one so severe in society's estimation as his father and himself.

"The poor," he murmured, bitterly, "who breathe or cares for them! What are their sufferings, their wrongs, their deaths? Who ever heard of a rich man should stoop to notice them?"

"Did you," the widow next one the low of the widow for not swallowing any commiseration. He continued to read, and the indifference upon his face, her respect for the emotions of the cold, proud color at which she was a member.

"I think," she said, the proposed plan of action was unexceedingly facilitated by the unexpected letter-carrier from the letter. And now, if you have time to put it into execution.

"I will," said the secretary, and he rose.

"Stay, Leon," he said, rising, and gracefully returning the note, "am compelled to resign my post, to thank you for the kindness I have ever received from you, and to wish you a happy heart to turn my back upon Toledo."

"I will not start, sir," said the young, now pale, now look surprised. She stung bowed, and look. Ximene, in the eye with his customary air of mingled confidence and dignity. There was nothing in her manner or appearance to indicate that she was interested, in the slightest, either in his staying or going. She simply bowed, coldly—indifferently. But could her soulless bare penetrated the feelings beneath that air of proud reserve, he would have found his remark: for the lady was like one transfixed.

Going!

Was this the end of all her schemes, her hopes? *Thus!* Was he a man with a man's eye, and a man's mind, and could he not see into the meaning of her daily visits to his office? Could the flimsy pretext of her desire to know the destiny of her estate have been taken by him for a serious thing? Would any lady care to know about such things enough to give whole hours to them every day? And when she sat at the table opposite his desk reading deeds and mortgages, and interest statements, was it not plain to the dullest eye that it was his beauty she was observing—not the deeds, his face she was examining—not the mortgages, the expression of his mouth—not the figures in her mind—not the interest statements? Did ladies sit thus nine with fairly handsome men—the simply to understand their fortunes? Or was it to give them an opportunity to take courage with the thought that in such close quarters for days they were not unwilling to give their hands, notwithstanding the disparity in rank? Could he not see that she was pleased to be in the library, or she would not have come there so constantly? And what could have been the meaning of the half papers about stale properties? Why, where were his eyes that were his eagerly? Must a lady say plain out: "It is you that I have come to see—not the property?" Why any man, with half a mind would have understood her and saved her from such humiliation! Was it her proud, reserved air that had misled him so? And if so, could he see that it was all assumed, thrown up as it were like a rampart around a heart that was in its might chance to have of her woman's modesty? Scarcely now in a thousand but would have understood that when a lady is silent, she looks to be addressed; that when she asks a question of a handsome man, she expects to be answered; that when she receives notes—yes, even by another question, to which she can only reply by the answer that is in her heart, to lead to a conversation—not open words, interests and expectations that are to be met by the eye to open more diversified, and that beget thoughts many to a lady's ear and lead her gently on to the declaration of love. But he could not interview after interview, and in the end to a blushing confession—and he was a man—and he was in love! Why she had had the idea that men comprehended—had intuitively understood, and would not have needed a woman to instruct them. If she were a man, she would have known them from instinct! If could not be that he was not a man—and made for everything but dullness, understand them also! Was it not plain that he was not made for one of those not to meet? If she were a poor man, and a rich and noble lady should give her an opportunity to woo and win her, would she be so cruel as to be insensible to beauty and to forsake all for one so far unsurpassed? Not she. And was not he a man?

Going!

What! when competence and a high-born and beautiful woman were offered him, was he beautiful woman so censorious that they could be found at every step? Were fortunes so plentiful that they could be had for the asking, like pebbles on the high-way? Were well-paid secretaryships to be had everywhere? Was love a thing to be had—friendless and unknown—regret to make his way in the world, with a fortune, a position, a home, a name, as everybody knew or might know, adventurers without patrons waste their lives away in nevertheless, hopeless, and in the end full unnoticed and unknown?

Going!

Was the man mad? Mad he must be, or he would not be thinking of leaving such large-paid wages, and a comfortable home—of which, if he had the courage, he might be the master!

Going!

Where? From Toledo. Why, that is into the world—into the world—where he was sure not swallowed up, and never heard of after. Why not, indeed? Why not go into the world, where, to which she could dispatch a confidant who could inform her from day to day of his progress in life's battle, and whom, should he not die, she might be faithful, haggard or buoyant—and of his spirit, she had no doubt—to meet?

Going!

Going her! To where she could not see him, speak to him, think of him, when she wished! Was he mad—did he wish to kill her—had he no sense of the misery that he was inflicting upon himself by such a step? Was he downright mad? Mad! Was there a single man in the world who would be doubled, trebled, quadrupled, yea, raised to any sum he wished—would he not pay it?

Going!

Was what cause? Who or what had trespassed upon his sensibilities that he should think of such a thing? Was there a single man in the world equal to wheelers, and what was his for this? Had any of the household insulted him; if so, the offender should be punished—and where were the others not in his liking—they should at once be made to go. Were his wages not to his mind? They should be doubled, trebled, quadrupled, yea, raised to any sum he wished—would he not pay it?

Going!

Going, there now. Her very blood, sympathizing with the pulses of his heart, rushed to her head and her heart, too, in pity for her fear, feels as it has been roughly crushed in the grasp of a giant, and through by a flash of dazzling lightning; and then, as the fear of his going flashed over her, nothing, deadening weight had suddenly descended upon the heart.

Was a man?—and though, with a staggering effort of her will, she retained her usual demeanor to the eye.

Such were the thoughts that galloped swiftly through her fertile mind, as she looked the secretary in the eye.

Leon thought her cold. He had anticipated a burst of feeling, a passionate appeal—a prayer for, though by no means vain, he fancied that he had read in her manner that she was not to be won at first it could not have passed unobserved; and also that his reason for leaving would be asked: in which case he was fully supplied with answers to be disappointed.

"I am sorry," he said, "that circumstances that I have thought it necessary to make known to you, should compel me to leave you at this time. I am sorry, too, that I have not been able to make you understand their force sufficiently to induce you to request me to remain. But I am convinced that I am right in my decision, and that I am acting for the best. I have, therefore, only to thank you for the kindness you have ever shown me, and to wish you a happy heart to turn my back upon Toledo."

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that the widow attached no importance to what had been said by the servants, upon whom her eye still rested with the same proud, indifferent expression, as though wondering at his audacity in supposing that a lady in her position could be interested for one moment in anything proposed by an individual so utterly obscure.

Leon felt hurt, and blushingly continued:

"Should it be your wish, madam, I will remain till you shall have chosen your successor, when you perhaps would be spared the annoyance of indicating his office."

There was no answer.

Leon colored with a sense of unmerited humiliation, and his fine features kindled with subdued resentment.

Could he at that moment but have looked in upon the heart of the fair patrician, and observed the bewilderment, the amazement, the grief, that chained her as in a spell; and, more than all, the proud modesty that feared to trust itself to speak, lest in its confusion it should say the wrong word, or one word too much, and thereby lose its dignity!

"I see, madam," he observed, "that you do not deem me worthy of even a momentary notice, and I will therefore no longer claim your attention. I would add, in justification of what might otherwise appear in your judgment, like undue haste, that I am driven into this sudden resignation, which indeed has been the thought of many days, but that I take my departure with the satisfaction that your interests remain safe in the hands of a lawyer of books in a state that will give ample time for a familiar comprehension of the duties in his office shall succeed me."

He would have said "farewell," but that he felt it would be viewed as impertinent in one of his condition. He bowed it, however, gracefully and with obedience, and retired, leaving the widow who could scarcely believe that she was not in a frightful dream, like one stunned.

But as the secretary disappeared, a species of desperation burst into a sensation of distance ascended to her temples, but with a violent effort of will she forced it down again. Objects before her began to grow dim; but she strove to look them as it were, back to steadiness, and talking advantage of the lucid moment, spasmodically exclaimed:—

"Stop, sir!"

But too late—Leon, pale and chafed with mingled emotions, was already in the street.

"Did you call, my lady?" inquired Sancho, who had just returned from his errand to the Viceroy.

"After Leon—quick, and tell him I wish to see him. No, stay—follow him and let me know where he goes. Begone!"

The lad returned in about an hour, and found his mistress with a letter in her hand.

Sancho, who had a habit of never appearing to observe anything, and yet saw everything, noticed this and was quiet and attentive.

"Well, strah?" demanded the widow.

"He is at the inn of the Golden Four Travellers," was the reply.

His mistress tossed him a piece of silver.

"That for your pains and silence, boy. Go."

The boy promised to be discreet, and two minutes later was fast asleep in the attic in the wall.

"I'll to my chamber for thought," continued the widow, turning to her companion. "Let me not be disturbed till dusk."

At dusk a fainting woman was missing.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

SPRING.

BY TAMAR ANNE KINGSLEY.

Old Winter heads his hoary head,
And sighs of woe issue from his breast;
His staff is growing in his hand,
For he is a-feeble bit and old.
Crowned with a wreath of opening buds,
With gentle step and pleasing eye,
Comes forth, and smiling on the Earth,
Assures the people of Spring.

Welcome I—sweet, gentle, beauteous Spring,
We welcome thee with sight; give
Beneath thy smile the buds will blossom,
The birds will warble cheerful notes;
Beneath thy touch bright tender leaves
Will deck each naked shrub and tree;
The shrunken from from icy bands
Will lengthen day by day.

The songsters warned by Autumn's blast
To seek a warmer, sunnier clime,
Return to meet thee with their strains,
And offer music at thy shrine.
The insects' shy, humming voices,
With the sweet voice of Spring,
The daisies spring up 'neath thy footsteps—
A flowery vest to clothe.

THE WIFE'S CONQUEST.

A TALE OF MYSTERY AND RETRIBUTION.

BY WILLIAM HENRY ERSKINE.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1857, by Robert Tomes, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Eight days after the discovery and scene narrated in the preceding chapter, the town of Castle Tale, fully acknowledged as the son and heir of the noblest lord in France, by those who came in search of him, left the Astor House with the widow, his mother, together with the inseparable Ambrose and Mary accompanied by the Count Dembrigny and M. Cussac, to embark on board the steamer.

Old Higgens, who had been for months absent on the Newfoundland banks fishing, was present, and received leave to forsake Virlen and Ambrose. The old sailor carried a valise in his hand, and his new-roughened face was shining with joy.

As the four last passengers left the carriage it stopped for them so slight, Isabel's face became suddenly pale.

"See!" she exclaimed. "There is my—my stepfather! He sees us and looks as if he wanted for us!"

"Fear him not!" said Virlen, as his eye fell on the haggard face of the Count. "Before the gendarmes was wrapped to the breast in a cloak, and above the folds of it his face glared with fiery and vindictive light.

The whole party alighted. Isabel clung to her husband with excited alarm; but the count boy, that was now rapidly recovering her former color and beauty! For her side was the Hardenbrook de Fontoise, still noble looking and beautiful. M. Cussac and the captain followed, while Ambrose, with Mary on his arm, followed towards the rear of the steamship.

Suddenly Mr. Shenstone, with the looks and actions of a frenzied man, advanced and met Isabel and Virlen. He threw off his cloak and revealed in a pistol in each hand, fired at the hearts of both in the same moment. M. Cussac, who had seen the intention, struck up his right arm and the shot clove the air above Isabel's head. But the bullet from the other pistol passing close to Virlen's cheek shivered the glass of the carriage, but hurt no one. The madman was instantly seized, but struggling, broke from his captors and succeeded in escaping amid the crowd.

This incident for a few moments disturbed the whole party; but M. Cussac hastened on board, fearful of being not only his prize but the large reward which he was to receive from the consuls if he should discover and bring him back his son.

The steamer had hardly got under motion, and how our hero and his company swiftly down the noble bay of New York, having for behind them scenes and years of suffering as well as of happiness for all days are not dark even to the miserable.

When, at length, after having been now three days on board, and they began to realize the truth of their change of circumstances, and that all was not a dream, they commenced to discourse with wonder and gratitude upon the marvellous series of events which had conspired to bring to pass such a great results. Virlen asked many questions, but mainly indeed, about his father, of M. Cussac. The latter also made known to him or rather to Isabel, for his inquiries were evidently less important, the vision so openly of his father's wrong-doing; the circumstances which led to the repudiation of the Marchioness.

"Your husband's mother," said M. Cussac, "was the daughter of the Count Dembrigny, a faithful soldier of the crown. She was beautiful, as you see, and was married to the Marquis, who then loved and love her. But it proved, it would seem, a match of policy on his part, as he desired to keep the title and almost princely estate of the lands of Castle Fontoise in the same scutcheon. He married for the first year or two went happily enough as the world's eyes; but at length it could not be concealed that the mind of the Marquis de Fontoise had become not a wedded husband, the fascinating yet somewhat haughty wife of the Count Dembrigny.

"The end may be divined," resumed M. Cussac. "On the part of the Marquis there was no concealment and the marriage therefore unlawful because not sanctioned by the Church, he openly repudiated her; and the Count, who was a man of energy as well as son, your present husband, to England. I was his friend, and assisted with him to conceal her, and so to use that they were suitably provided and regularly received the sum which the marquis paid quarterly to be paid to them. He immediately married in the Roman Church the daughter of Compte de Chevernay. His wife was jealous, and jealousy, ultimately succeeded in persuading the marquis not only to withhold from your father and mother his means of support, but, using his name, directed the boy to be taken from them, and to be brought and carried to America, there to be left unknown, unnamed, in the crowds of this world. You know the rest! The benevolent marchioness having heard of this her abhorred child had been seen in a boat being conveyed on board of a vessel, had followed by close inquiries, as she has now told me, found out that it had sailed for America, and employed me quarterly to be paid to them. He immediately married in the Roman Church the daughter of Compte de Chevernay. His wife was jealous

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

THE GRAVES OF MEMORY.

BY ALICE B. NEAL.

There is a lovely realm of ground
Beside a stream of rolling waves,
Where sunlight and where shadow rest
And singing winters kiss the leaves;
And over each there lies a spell
Though they were planted with a prayer.

Above our native homes they stand,
Before the midnight's sweeping stars;
A wreath is on their marble brows,
And cowls before the glory bow;
And yet, our choicest, dearest ones
A broken heart and harp served.

And one to pressing through the air,
As if the something we are there?
The heart and harp are in the dust,
The wreath is like a ruined spot;
The cross-crack'd vase I thought of you
Should rise when none but He was by.

Some other graves are decked with flowers
With myrtle from the hearth's own shelter,
Some with the perfumes of the air
Though round them lighting does fall fast,
Make their sweetest breathings still
Forever says: "I dare by, now by !"

Are there two chairs before the hearth,
Around together them a fireside pair?
The chairs serve one by my heart,
The lover whose hourly chorus no more,
The lover whose hourly chorus no more,
The wait, dark eyes with love-light there.

At three-and, all are mouldering low
In the dim vale of long ago.
Yes, three, and one who was more still
With many curls and deep thoughts;
Ah, one more wreathed in all these
Rests in the grave of memories.

FOREST SKETCHES.—NO. 24.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY CH. WARREN STODDARD.

ADVENTURE WITH A SPOUTING WHALE.

The night set in cold and windy, and instead of riding over to Shreveport, to get what there might be in the post-office for us, we sat down in mamma's sitting-room, and there called upon her to begin with for the story he had promised us. The shooting of the Imperial had put him in the vein for adventure which he said he would relate to us on the first opportunity; and what opportunity could be better than such an evening in such a place?

"Well, boys," said the old man, finishing the other from his pipe, and settling back on the little shelf where he kept it, "I'll tell ye a bit of adventure I once had above Behring's Strait. It wasn't very pleasant sport at the time, though it's well enough to think of now.

"One morning a lovely lighter came alongside, manned by half-a-dozen natives. Our captain had engaged her to go after fresh meat. About an hour before Hoagly—and I don't know but it may be sooner—there was a cry from the lighter, and there we were going, intending to be gone over one night. Our first man, a native named Isabel Nelson, named Bill Gilbee, was to take charge, and Sam Willis, Jack Springer, and myself, were to accompany him.

"We got our guns and pistols aboard the lighter —for we, then, were likely to be in the water about wherever Americans or Europeans ventured off in small parties—and having got our bodies and provisions in, we made sail up the river. We had a fair wind, and by noon we reached the mouth of the stream, up which we were to get our water. It was quite a little river, coming in from the north'ard and west'ard, and we were glad to find we could find that it was cooler and sweeter than the water of the Hoagly.

"About four miles up we came to the camp where the native superstition were in the habit of stopping, and here we came to anchor. Some of the boys set or fifty feet back from the bank, on the edge of a thick, deep grass that was growing there, and each one water enough to supply quite a stream. It was at this spot we meant to get our water, and as soon as all was ready we set our native at work carrying the casks to and from the lighter, we filling them at the spring.

"As we five could fill much faster than the porters could carry, and as there was no fear of an attack that we should be over under the low sun, Gilbee and I left the other three to their work while we went to explore the jungle. For we had got a great way. The reeds were so thick and tall that we could with difficulty make our way along. Gilbee said, in fact, we could not, save where a sort of path had made here 'cause, likely, as we were in there the male made an errand about the tiger. We were afraid of the tigers, and we went in to make no trouble.

"Then we returned we asked the natives if tigers were ever seen about in that neighborhood? They said they had never seen one, though there had been many found away in the hills, of hooping, which were supposed to have been made by the tiger. But they said there was no fear of one being killed all the others, until he had been engaged in work that would take him to this spring—more or less for fifteen years, but not more than that—and during that period like the animal in question.

"Most of the people of that region have a superstition often of the tiger. The few specimens which have been carried around to show have not seemed like the real Royal Tiger of Bengal. There are certainly many different sorts of tigers, and they vary in size as well as in color. The smaller kind have the same general characteristics, and are exceedingly fierce and bloodthirsty in the larger way; but the colors are not so bright. The Royal Tiger has a yellow ground to his skin, and the black and stripes are a beautiful black, running over the back, and down the sides, about in the same course with the ribs. But it is with regard to the size of the animal that there is the most mistake. When I tell a man I have seen a tiger as long as from his toe to the end of the back, and then five feet of tail added to that, making fifteen feet in all, he don't want to believe me. But it is so.

"The tiger has been seen to carry off a full-sized buffalo. An old Hindoo merchant—an honorable man, and one who could have no earthly reason for telling what was untrue—told me that he saw killed a tiger in one of the deep jungles of the Burmanese land, which measured twenty-four feet in length! I might have hesitated about believing this had I not seen one myself nearly twice as large as I supposed they ever grew.

"You can imagine something of the strength of such an animal. It is well known that the tiger's science, the their destructiveness is beyond all precedent. They kill for the mere sake of killing. Let one of them make his way among a herd of cattle, and he will kill without eating a morsel, while through a living animal to be seen. While they can get blood they will not taste flesh. They do not eat to appease their hunger only; they eat to gorge themselves; they will gulp down blood while they can shed it. It is said by those who understand their habits that they love human flesh more than anything else; and will leave the blood of any animal for a man. Such taste as that. Though it may flatter humanity, I must say I fail to admire or appreciate.

"When night came we hauled our lighter into the middle of the stream, and then turned in. When we awoke in the morning one of the natives said he had heard a tiger, howling miles during the night, not far off. At one time he thought it was a tiger, and was upon the point of arousing us; but as the howling ceased entirely he concluded it was over the yelping of a dog, and he continued to let us sleep.

"As soon as we had eaten our breakfast we hauled our lighter to the shore, and commenced work. The sand

was very high enough to allow down on the lighter, and consequently we could not see what was going on. We could hear, however, the natives talking in their usual loud tones, and we supposed that they were at their work. Suddenly there was a cry from the natives, and we heard a rushing in the sand, as if some animal were coming down the bank. We looked up, and there, not fifty feet from us, was a tiger, coming down upon us at full speed. He was a large one, and his mouth was open as if he were about to spring upon the nearest native. We had loaded our guns with ball before we began work, and we were all ready to fire.

"A ball passing through his body from one of our guns would, if it did not kill him outright, bring him to the natives at the bravest.

"It was very evident that no time was to be lost, and yet not one could move an inch from his place. However, we were just upon the point of moving, when I noticed that the male was not with us. I called out to inquire, but every one was in such a confusion, I said that they were up to some plot, but what it was I could not tell. They saw that we were looking for the male, and in the confusion they seemed to have studied to themselves. Nobody could tell where he was.

"The tiger means for leap at us. He looks fine if we got swords and guns! He find no—he will have to run back to his own jungle, and leave us all him——"

"The Indian probably meant to tell us where to aim, but that moment a movement in another quarter arrested the attention of us all. We had gained a position to sell, and then watched the tiger with the most intense eagerness. I saw the muscles of his body contract, as if he were about upon the soil—and then came that peculiar gathering of the hind legs, and the act of leaping. Only power is all concentrated. On the next instant he was in the air, and I saw the claws as well as the six native disappeared, as if by magic. They had, grupped down into the spaces between the casks, doubling themselves up like so many hedgehogs.

"The tiger struck the tops of the casks, and seemed for the moment to be utterly confounded; but he soon recovered himself, and leaped down. The beast stood slightly quartering, with his head from me, so that my best point of sight was just behind his shoulder. I fired, and he dropped as if nearly so.

"While yet the ring of our reports was upon the air we heard a deafening howl, and before the smoke had cleared away, the male was upon us. The lighter, the tiger was upon the sand, very near the spot where he had crouched before. He saw us, and with another yell leaped towards us. I didn't feel my musket, and struck him upon the head as he passed me, but the blow seemed to make no impression upon him. He kept on some yards beyond me, and then turned, as if meaning to gather for a spring, but rushed directly towards us. We moved quickly aside, and he passed between us.

"We now knew, of course, that he was bewildered, and that no such attack was to be made on us. As he turned a second time he made straight for the water, which was not more than ten yards off, and stood by to see it.

"He swam for about